SOME IMPLICATIONS OF GROUP DYNAMICS

FOR THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FIELD

A Thesis

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the Faculty of the School of Public Relations

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Master of Science
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by

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. . . . Hiroshima and Nagasaki seem to have made many physical scientists ready to consider social facts as being perhaps of equal reality. . . . The bomb has driven home with dramatic intensity the degree to which social happenings are both the result of, and the conditions for the occurrence of, physical events. Gradually, the period is coming to an end when the natural scientist thinks of the social scientist as someone interested in dreams and words, rather than as an investigator of facts, which are not less real than physical facts, and which can be studied no less objectively.

KURT LEWIN

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INTRODUCTION

Raymond Miller, considered as one of the most re-
sponsible public relations practitioners on the contemporary
scene, has observed: "The public relations practitioner
deals with man's relation to man . . . his duty is to help
men to live together amicably and justly."[1] Anyone with an
understanding of the public relations function could hardly
contest the statement. On the other hand, not all public
relations practitioners have shown the clear psychological
insight that is inherent in Mr. Miller's observation. Un-
fortunately, there is much more evidence to show that the
social practitioner in this field has been no less guilty
than those in other fields, i.e., church, government, busi-
ness and industry, et. al, of perverting knowledge for the
purpose of domination. The modern field of psychology has,
unintentionally, of course, contributed further to this
traditional manipulation and domination of men's minds. The
concept of the "public interest" - though it has frequently
been distorted and used to mask evil deeds - is a promise

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[1] R.W. Miller, Keeper of the Corporate Conscience,
(New York: Island Press Cooperative, Inc., 1946), p. 8.

"to help men to live together amicably and justly."

Recent years have seen a development in the study of man's relation to his social environment which may well be the key to greatly improved human relations - - Group Dynamics. Perhaps the most meaningful area of psychological investigation to be developed, Group Dynamics has uncovered knowledge about man's group living processes that deserves to be brought to the attention of the public relations field.

An interest in social science investigations - particularly psychology - for other than manipulative purposes, has not been a widespread characteristic of the public relations field. For the most part, the "goings on" in psychology laboratories were heard from afar and the meager communication, besides being technical, lacked interpretation of their implications for the social practitioner. It is this situation which may explain the "gap" between what-is-known and what-is-done in the public relations field.

The problems resulting from worker dissatisfactions, unhappy community relations, labor-management misunderstandings, technological changes in industry, etc., are all problems for which the public relations practitioner must at some time or other provide his client with sound and workable solutions; they are the very same problems for which solutions are being found by group dynamics research. But

the latter is primarily concerned with prediction and control
of the group processes involved. Only at the risk of limiting
his professional usefulness and of aggravating rather than
solving social problems can the public relations practitioner
continue unaware of this significant "action research." The
pressing human problems are the problems of the moment.
Solved, they hold much for the "public good;" unsolved, they
threaten the very future of the world of men as we know it.
Only by understanding the complex and dynamic processes of
successful group living can the public relations practitioner
ever hope to understand what is in the "public interest" and
what will make for the "public good."

In a simple content analysis of a number of definitive
works, pamphlets, statements and addresses on public re-
lations, this investigator noted the frequent reference go
groups and group situations. These references took the
following forms: "the opinion of various groups," "unrest
among a group of employees," "winning the support of in-
fluential community groups," "establishing the stockholders
as a participating group," "the attitude held by certain
groups," and "a leading group of citizens." A group is im-
plied when referring to stockholders, employees, dealers,
government, community, nation, etc. In most phases of a
program, public relations does deal with groups of people.
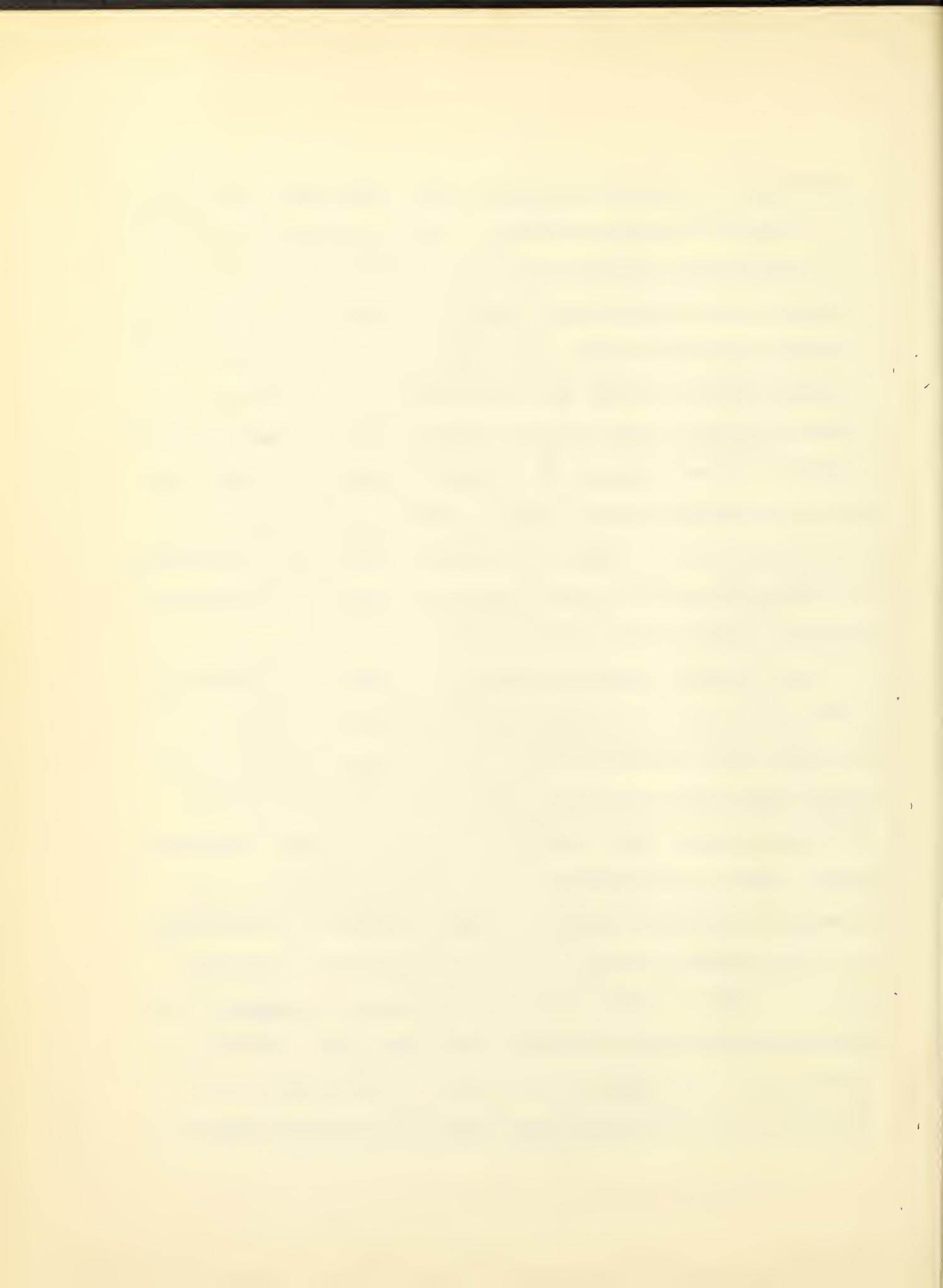
This point is more clearly demonstrated with reference to
employee relations, community relations and stockholder
relations. These groups may be and often are sub-groups of
larger groups.

The public relations practitioner frequently finds
himself explaining to a Board of Directors why a long stand-
ing policy of the company should be changed in the company's
interest; he may be a part of the management team meeting
with the grievance committee of the local union; he is in-
volved with his own staff as a working unit; or his client
has a morale problem in his factory. In all of these
"group situations" in which he may find himself, the cause
of effective public relations is best served when all of
these groups function efficiently and in a manner which is
conducive to a high level of accomplishment and produc-
tivity.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It is the purpose of this
study (1) to show a number of points of common interest be-
tween the field of public relations and an area of social
science, namely, Group Dynamics; (2) to show that scientific
investigations in Group Dynamics have some very definite im-
plications for the field; and (3) to evaluate research

techniques and methodology used in Group Dynamics in terms
of their applicability to some of the special problems of
research in the field of public relations.

Importance of the study. Public relations activities
are primarily directed at influencing groups or sub-groups
of people - - employees, stockholders, consumers, govern-
ment, suppliers, dealers, and communities - - toward atti-
tudes of goodwill and cooperation in their relations with
the client, business or industry. It seems reasonable to
say that most, if not all, public relations activities are
primarily attempts to influence social attitudes and social
behavior. Group Dynamics is interested in the processes by
which social attitudes and behavior are influenced. It is
interested in the dynamics of group living. Inasmuch as
men are gregarious, their group life exerts an important
influence upon what they think, what they do and why they
do it. It follows, then, that any human activity which is
attempting to influence human conduct must of necessity
concern itself with the forces and processes at work in the
shaping of man's attitudes and behavior. Why men are what
they are and what they might be under other circumstances
is important knowledge for the field of public relations.
More correctly, it is fundamental for the conduct of public

relations activities just as the hammer and saw are funda-
mental tools for the carpenter.

Present methods in public relations have relied almost
solely upon mass media communications to get its message
across. There are growing signs that mass media communica-
tions may be operating according to the law of diminishing
returns. Consider the average person's reaction to the
confused mass of symbols which daily and hourly bid for his
attention:

> Frequently he shields himself with sheer indifference
> in order to find his way under this barrage of con-
> flicting symbols. To this indifference must be
> added the limitations of powerfully negative pre-
> dispositions. Finally, include the misunderstandings
> of more complicated messages, and we have a more
> accurate picture of the limited penetration of
> mass appeals. In view of such facts, it is futile
> to hope that mass media alone can succeed even in
> adequately disseminating our messages, let alone
> modifying attitudes.[2]

Evidence is growing which points to the increasing
failures of the mass media to fulfill "expectations" in the
vital communication function for which they have been so
long relied upon. It is becoming increasingly clear that
their use will have to be considerably augmented with other
methods of communication if the public relations message is

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[2] Morris Janowitz, "New Directions for Public Relations,"
Summary: Public Relations Workshop (Chicago: American
Council on Race Relations, 1946), p. 23.

to reach those publics for which it is intended. A thought-
ful student has described society as a "highly intricate
network of partial or complete understandings between the
members of organizational units."[3] We are just beginning to
suspect the true role of communication in bringing about
this social effect. This knowledge, together with our in-
sight into the nature of public opinion in our society, may
well provide a serious interest in Group Dynamics as a new
public relations tool. Wirth has suggested that:

> The characteristic feature of public opinion in
> our society lies both in the fact that so many human
> beings are affiliated with a variety of organized
> groups, each of which represents only a segment of
> their interests, and that another large portion of
> our fellow men are unattached to any stable group
> and in that sense constitute unorganized masses
> and thereby leave the decision making to those who
> are organized and can exercise their corporate
> power. . . . It (public opinion) is precipitated
> through the clash of representitive ideas reflecting
> more faithfully the positions confronting the
> respective groups that compose the society. Our
> society and others comparable to it, are composed
> of varieties of constituent groups, occupational
> and economic, racial and ethnic and religious.
> Each of these groups articulates its own interests,
> has its own powers, leadership, creed, political
> and corporate organization.[4]

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[3] Edward Sapir, Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences
Vol. 7, pp. 178-182, see "group".

[4] Louis Wirth, "Consensus and Mass Communication,"
American Sociological Review, Vol. 13, No. 1, February, 1948,
pp. 8-9.
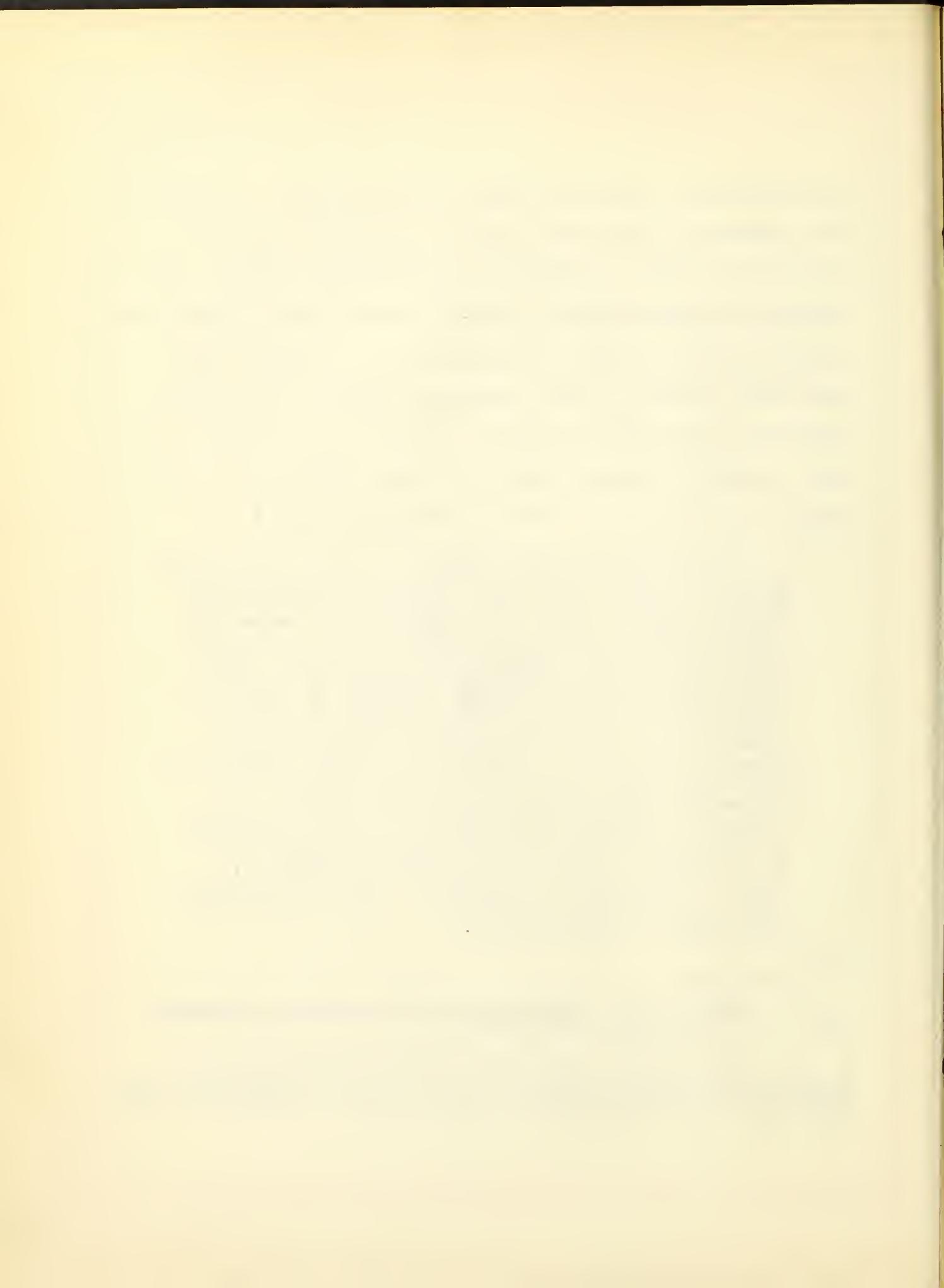
Already Group Dynamics research has piled up sufficient experimental evidence to support Kurt Lewin's contention that "it is easier to change individuals formed into a group than to change any one of them separately."[5] This may come as something of a shock to those in the public relations field who spend millions of dollars annually of their clients' money in newspaper, magazine and radio publicity and advertising. Practitioners are only human after all and they, more often than not, show the well-known reluctance to accept new methods and concepts for fear that they might be compelled to give up the familiar and comforting. "Often they have traded in the old car for a new model; but a new form of locomotion, a car for a horse, or a plane for a car -- that is another question." There is important work to be done and the old tools may have to be replaced as new ones are made available.

The growing demands on the public relations field require social science knowledge that is both applicable and practicable. Theories are necessary to the advance of all knowledge, but the needs of public relations require social science knowledge that has been proven experimentally. With

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5 Kurt Lewin, "Group Decision and Social Change," Readings in Social Psychology, edited by Newcomb, Hartley and others (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1947), p. 343.

this thought in mind, this study has been undertaken in an attempt to show that results extremely valuable to an improved public relations technique are being achieved in a vital and relatively new social science area, Group Dynamics; that these research findings are not only gaining wide acceptance in other professions but that they are such as may well provide an entirely new approach to some of the problems in public relations.

II.   PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A rather thorough inquiry into the literature on public relations and in the field of psychology has revealed no investigation which could be called a "previous study" in the field of this thesis. On the other hand, to report the studies, which relate themselves to the development in social psychology leading to the concept of Group Dynamics, could add nothing new to what has already been said. The thesis that "Group Dynamics has special implications for the public relations field" may be considered quite correctly to be the only original contribution of this study.

III.   BASIC ASSUMPTIONS AND HYPOTHESES OF THIS STUDY

Those "publics" with which the public relations pro-

gram is so vitally concerned may logically be divided into
(1) individuals not interlinked in any definable unit or
sub-unit of social structure, e.g., the hard of hearing who
are a "public" for a Hearing Aid firm, (2) individuals who
are organized into loose, unstable groups and relatively
isolated, e.g., migrant workers and others who move from
place to place never becoming a part of any community, and
(3) groups having some definite organizational structure,
e.g., a union, a fraternity, a luncheon club, a political
party. It is the latter with which this study is primarily
concerned. The significance of this study for the public
relations field may be said to spring from two sociological
observations with reference to groups: (1) our society is
described as a network of partial or complete understanding
between members of organizational units, and (2) one of the
features of public opinion in our society is that it repre-
sents primarily the decision making of organized groups
rather than those masses of loosely organized or isolated
individuals.

      There were two assumptions with which the investigator
approached this study: (1) The group is an entity in it-
self and this is a matter of both ordinary and empirical
knowledge. Group behavior constitutes a complexity rather
than a sum of the behavior of the individual members in the

group, (2) What may be said about groups may also be said
about "publics" having an organizational structure. Such
a public is a group and the two terms may thus be used
interchangeably.

The lone hypothesis of this study was that knowledge
of the principles and processes involved in the behavior
of groups (publics) is essential to the development of the
public relations function as defined in this thesis. This
knowledge has been most highly developed in the body of
knowledge now known as Group Dynamics.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Communication. It is difficult if not impossible to
overstress the important function of communication, par-
ticularly language, as a function of social interaction be-
tween the members of groups. The degree of success in a
public relations program is more often than not the dif-
ference between successful and unsuccessful communication
with the groups or "publics." Elton Mayo has pointed to
the present day inadequacies in human communication as one
of the major problems in our society:

> I believe that social study should begin with
> careful observation of what may be described as
> communication: that is, the capacity of an
> individual to communicate his feelings and ideas

to another, the capacity of groups to communicate
effectively and intimately with each other.
This problem is, beyond all reasonable doubt, the
outstanding defect that civilization is facing
today.[6]

Language, man's main form of communication, has made

it possible for the human race to pass on its experiences

and to accumulate a culture of ideas, beliefs and sentiments.

Although it is generally accepted by social scientists that

communication exerts an effect on individual and group

behavior, little or nothing is known of how this is done.

For the purpose of this study, communication will be

thought of as any process by which ideas, sentiments or

beliefs, and information are exchanged or shared through

language, visual presentation, suggestion or imitation,

social languate or behavior.

Cooperation. A good deal of public relations activity

is directed toward acquiring, achieving or maintaining a

spirit of cooperation between the client, business or

corporation and a number of groups. Frequently, good public

relations may be described as just such a high degree of

cooperation between the client and his publics. In most

social interation, particularly between members in a

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6 Elton Mayo, The Social Problems of an Industrial
Civilization, (Boston: Harvard University, 1945), p. 22.

group and between groups, a "state of cooperation" is synonymous with a "satisfactory orientation."

As it will be used in this study, cooperation will be understood to mean a form of social interaction characterized by a high degree of accommodation and assimulation between individuals or groups in which efforts are combined to the mutual advantage or aid of the participating individuals or groups; and for the promotion or achievement of some common purpose or goal.

Group. Most if not all of the research in Group Dynamics with which this study is concerned will be referring to the interaction of face-to-face groups. These face-to-face groups may be primary or secondary or intermittent.

An example of a primary group is the family, the neighborhood or play groups.[7] A secondary group is larger and more formal in its organization. A lodge, the army, and a corporation might be cited as examples.[8] An intermittent group refers to a face-to-face group that meets periodically or sporadically, but continues to operate in

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[7] Dictionary of Sociology, edited by H.P. Fairchild (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), p. 135.

[8] Loc. cit.

the intervals between meetings[9] The numerous business conventions and "institutes" with which public relations men are readily familiar provide excellent examples of the intermittent group.

Unless otherwise indicated, reference to "group" in this study shall mean a number of people "between whom there is an established pattern of psychological interaction";[10] the association may be face-to-face frequently or intermittently; its own members as well as others recognize it as an entity.

Group Dynamics. The soundness of the approach to the understanding of human behavior, which conceives of the group as a unity, is pointed up in a simple but effective way by Lewin:

> An isolated ion behaves very differently than in its setting within the atom. You cannot study the behavior of molecules by studying only the atoms in isolation, or more generally, you cannot study wholes without keeping them intact. Similarly, one cannot study group life or draw conclusions for group life by making experiments on isolated individuals.[11]

9 Fairchild, Ibid., p. 136.

10 Op. cit., p. 133.

11 Kurt Lewin, "Experiments on Autocratic and Democratic Atmospheres," Soc. Frontiers, 1938, No. 4, p. 316.

Like the definition of public relations, the literature
dealing with the dynamics of groups seems to be without a
generally accepted definition of Group Dynamics. Bradford
has defined it as "an attempt to focus research effort upon
problems of how groups function and upon the methods for im-
proving the functioning of groups."[12] In this connection,
Professor Eugene Belisle, during a class discussion, stressed
the importance of the generalization accepted in social psy-
chology that "every individual must seek harmonious member-
ship with a group in order to fulfill fundamental human
drives."

Bradford's definition is far too simplified and does
not sufficiently or adequately denote the place of prominence
that Lewin[13] has given the concepts of "force" and "change"
in describing dynamic group living.

A more adequate definition and one which serves the
purpose of this study is this: Group Dynamics is the social
science concerned with discovering and describing the forces,
whether producing equilibrium or change, involved in group
behavior.

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12 "Toward Improved Skill in Group Living," Education
Leadership, Vol. 5, No. 5 (February, 1948), p. 288.

13 Cf. Kurt Lewin, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics," Human
Relations, Vol. I, No. 1 and 2, (1947).

Public Relations. Because no one really knows what
public relations is, attempts to define it satisfactorily
have not been too successful. Ask any public relations man
and he will give you his pet definition; they all vary in
length, completeness and what they stress. Some are
attempts at humor more than attempts to define the field,
i.e., "doing what comes naturally," "just good old horse
sense," "paying someone else to do what you should have
had sense enough to do in the first place." Others, though
brief, make interesting points, i.e. "scientific good-will,"
"applying the 'Golden Rule' to business," "keeping the
public on your side," "giving the public what it wants,"
"applying psychology to business relations." It can be
said, quite correctly, that a good deal of the confusion
that exists in the public attitude as to the nature of
public relations can justifiably be laid at the door of
public relations men themselves. They have failed to de-
fine their field of operations in a manner that would bring
clarity and understanding to the public mind. Public re-
lations men frequently jest about the fact that there are
as many definitions as there are practitioners. The
confusion about what public relations really is concerned
with, has been due to utterances and actions of public
relations men themselves. In this sense they have done con-

siderable damage to the general prestige of the field. A
definition,[14] accepted as official by the Public Relations
Society of America, has been included in Webster's New
International Dictionary. Although it still falls short of
a fully adequate definition, it promises to help dispel
some of the public bewilderment by providing the means from
which some sort of consensus might arise. LeBart's defini-
tion[15] presupposes a set of social science principles which
once known and put into operation become irrevocable and
flow in the direction of "social good." Whether social
science knowledge has or can achieve this stage presents a
very real question. Whether or not the application of
knowledge results in 'good' or 'evil' depends, in the
main, on how it is used by man. Knowledge itself is neutral.

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14 "The activities of an industry, union, corporation,
profession, government, or other organization in building
and maintaining sound and productive relations with special
publics such as customers, employees, or stockholders, and
with the public at large, so as to adapt itself to its
environment and interpret itself to society."

15 ". . . the development and application of principles,
methods, and techniques to the individuals or groups who
comprise, influence or are influenced by a given organization,
so as to build or maintain the human relationships requisite
to cooperation, understanding and progress of society."
Frank Todd LeBart, A General Enquiry Into the Nature of
Public Relations, Unpublished Master's thesis, Boston
University, School of Public Relations, 1949, p. 16.

Any definition of public relations which fails to reflect this understanding must in the end fail as a definition.

For the purpose of this study, public relations will be thought of both as a condition of social interaction and as an instrument for directing the course of social inter-action.

1. As a condition of social interaction, public relations are those relations, involving factors of opposition (competition and conflict) and cooperation (accomodation and assimilation) in a dynamic relationship, between an individual, corporation or other group entity and the publics or groups which must be considered in the course of fulfilling its social function.

2. As an instrument for directing the course of social interaction, public relations utilizes theories and techniques which represent the application of sociology, social psychology, economics, and anthropology as well as the special skills of oral and visual communication experts in adjusting the relations of a subject with its publics.[16]

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[16] The definition arrived at in this study draws rather freely upon definitions used in Fairchild, op. cit., particularly that of "public relations" by Alfred McClung Lee, p. 255, and that of "social interaction" by Galen M. Fisher, p. 285.
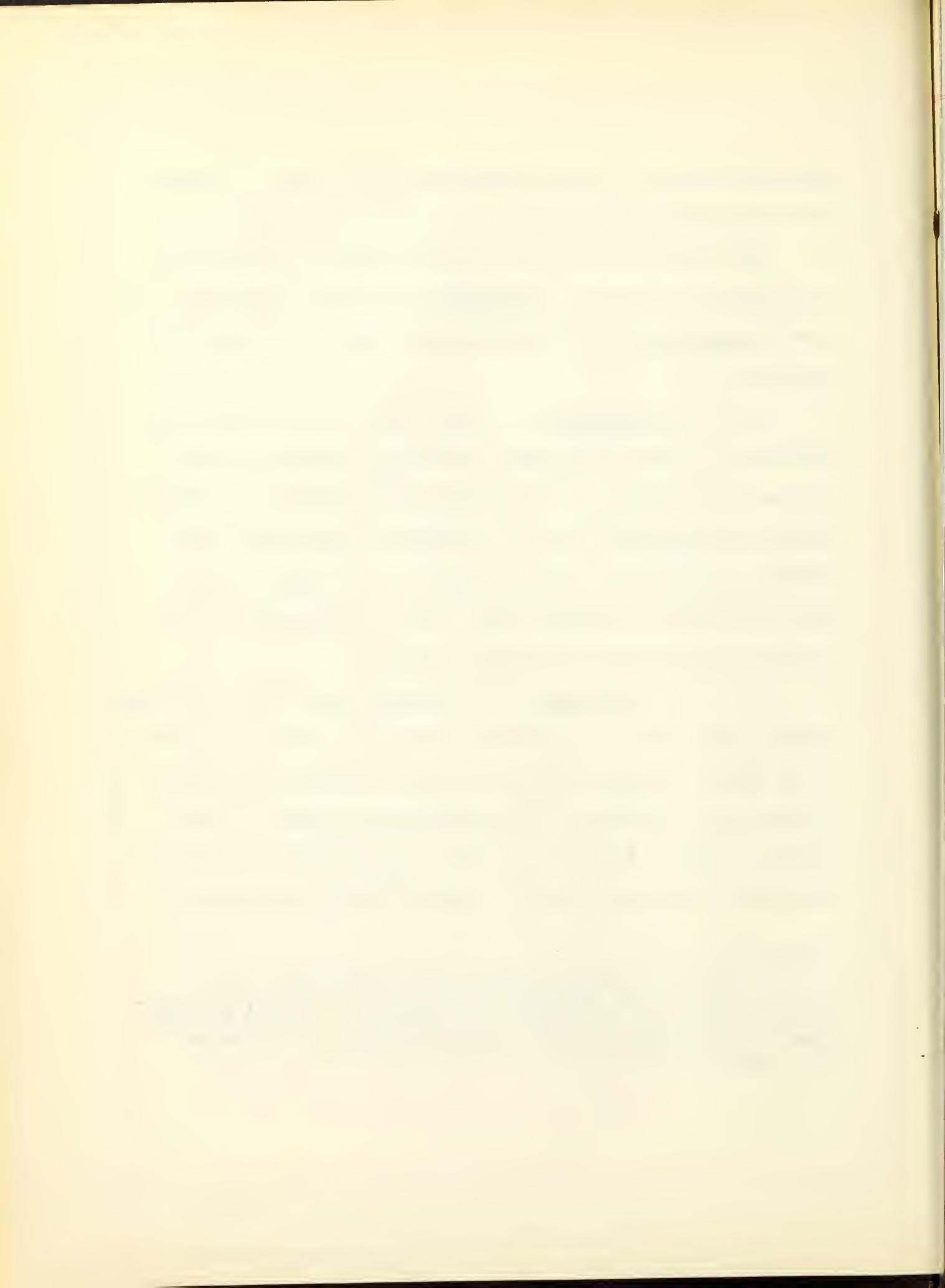
V. SOURCES

Two books by Kurt Lewin, <u>Principles of Topological
Psychology</u> and <u>A Dynamic Theory of Personality</u>, were in-
valuable as primary sources in making this study. His
more recent volume, <u>Resolving Social Conflicts</u>, edited by
his wife, Gertrude Lewin, has also contributed to a clarifi-
cation of Lewinian social psychology.

Moreno's <u>Who Shall Survive</u>? provided the investigator
with the necessary understanding of sociometry as a method
of portraying the social interaction between members of a
group. Dr. Moreno develops a technique for explaining the
complex patterns of social structure which has real use-
fulness for any one interested in the dynamics of groups.

Before the Research Center for Group Dynamics moved
from M.I.T. to the University of Michigan in July, 1948,
Dr. Dorwin Cartwright, director, made available some mat-
erials developed by members of the staff. This material
was highly important because it was unavailable anywhere
else.[17] Valuable research for this study was found in
<u>Human Relations</u>, a quarterly journal of studies toward the

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[17] The material was in a mimeographed form and was not,
at the time, published in any other form. Some of this mat-
erial has since been published. Where this has been dis-
covered, references to the material has been made to the
published source rather than to the unpublished manuscript
which might have been used in the study.
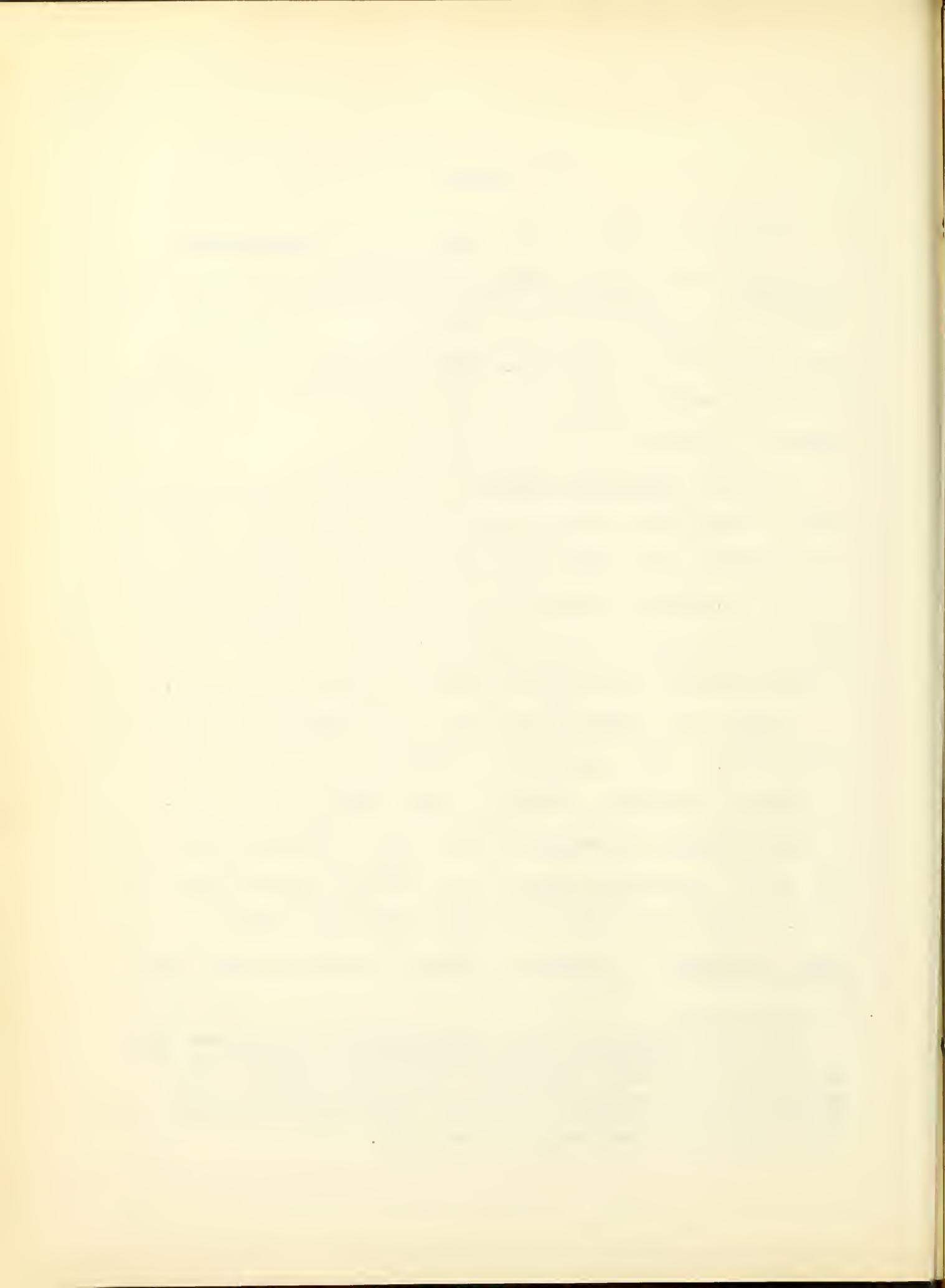
integration of the social sciences, and the Journal of
Social Issues, published quarterly by the Society for the
Psychological Study of Social Issues.

Other publications which have contributed substantially
to the ideas contained in this thesis are: The Proper Study
of Mankind, Stuart Chase: Encyclopedia of the Social
Sciences; Social Discovery, E.C. Lindeman; Elton Mayo's
two books, The Human Problems of An Industrial Civilization
and The Social Problems of An Industrial Civilization; the
American Council on Race Relations' publication, Summary:
Public Relations Workshop, which summarizes the proceedings
of a workshop held in New York, September 27-29, 1946, for
public relations personnel of integroup relations agencies;
Leila A. Sussmann's unpublished Master's thesis, The
Public Relations Movement in America, which is perhaps the
most comprehensive analysis produced thus far, and Keepers
of the Corporate Conscience, by Raymond Miller. A number
of articles appearing in the Public Relations Journal and
Fortune Magazine have been helpful. All the works just
mentioned, along with others, appear in the selected bib-
liography at the end of this thesis.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THIS THESIS

This thesis is mainly concerned with experimental
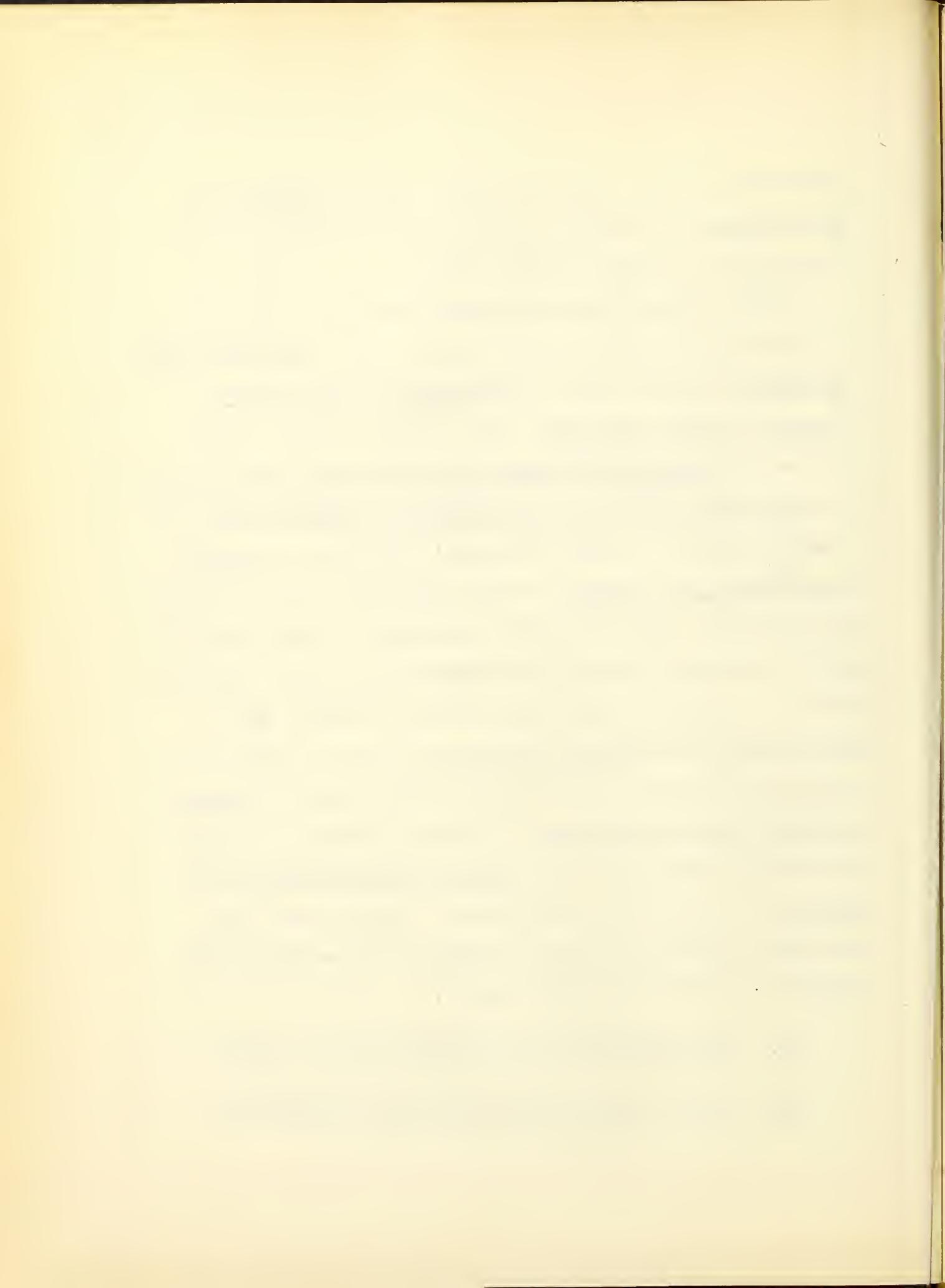
research in Group Dynamics and how this research may have

important implications for the public relations field.

Both public relations and Group Dynamics observe the need

for the integration of the social sciences; sociology, social

psychology, economics and anthropology. In both fields there

is a high respect for action research, and both are inter-

ested in improved knowledge of social behavior as a means

of improving human relationships. The activity in both

fields has been more or less called forth through the

demands of an enlightened social management.

Chapter II of this thesis gives a brief but sufficient

picture of social psychology so that the development of the

work in Group Dynamics may be understood. Kurt Lewin's

influence in this development is noted. A discussion of what

"scientific method" is in the social sciences has been in-

cluded so that the reader has something against which the

methods and techniques of Group Dynamics may be measured.

Unless it can be sufficiently established that the research

in Group Dynamics can be considered "scientific," this study

would be useless.

Chapter III contains the very heart of this thesis. The

first section discusses a number of representative experi-

ments together with their results for the purpose of demon-

strating both the method and the nature of research being

done.   The second section is an attempt to delineate how
and in what specific situations the public relations
practitioner might profit from the findings and methods
described in section one.

Chapter IV summarizes the generalizations made by
this study and presents some conclusions which seem alto-
gether sound in the light of the materials presented.   A
number of suggestions are made which have been inspired
during the process of writing this thesis.
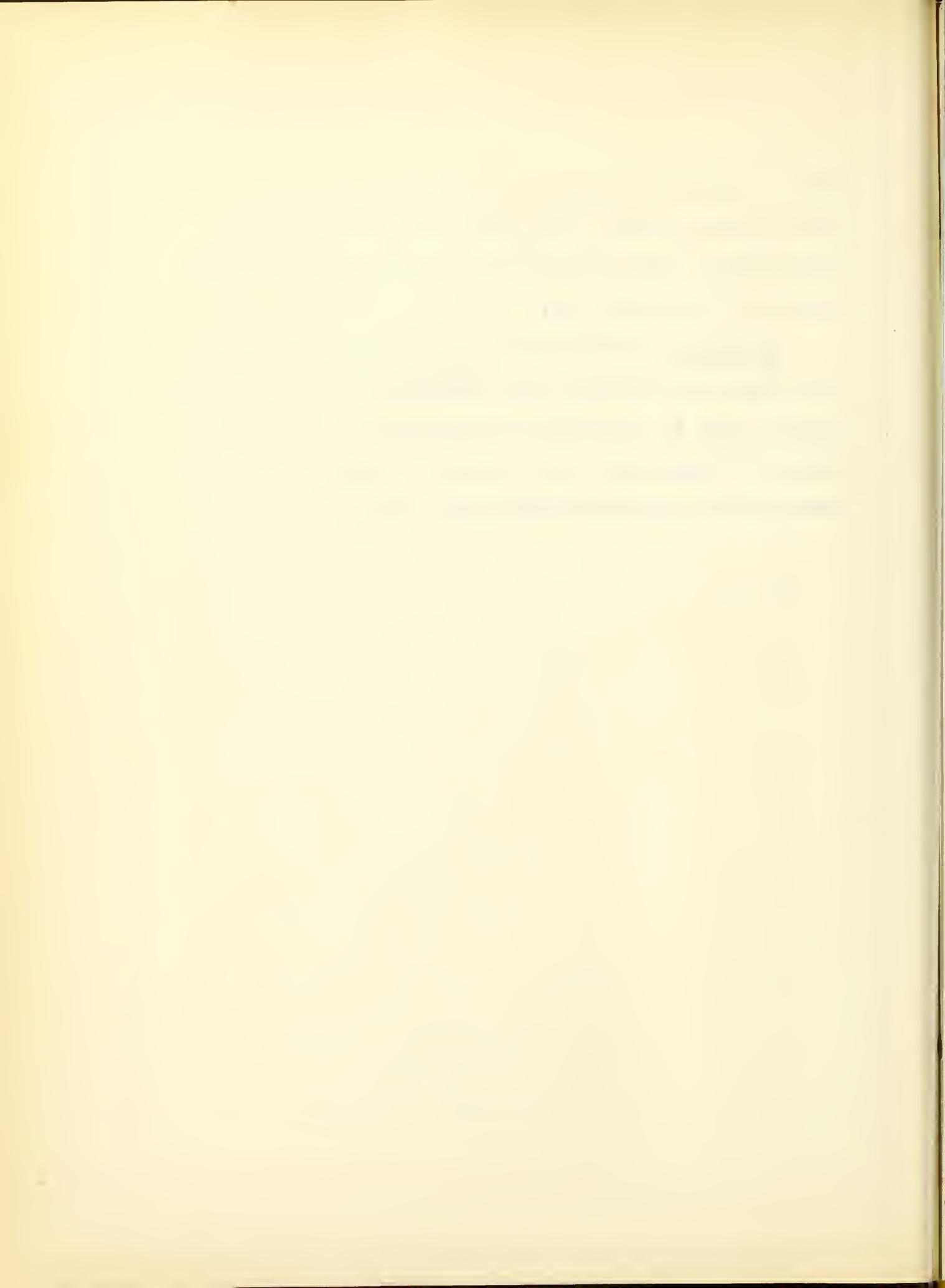
CHAPTER II

GROUP DYNAMICS AND THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

I. SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY: THE BACKGROUND

Man's education and training seem to be directed at
accomplishing two things for him: (1) understanding the
physical environment so that he may survive in it, and (2)
understanding the social environment so that he may get
along _in_ the group and _with_ the group. Understanding the
physical environment is purposely mentioned first because
the history of man seems to bear out the contention that
he has shown that preference.

Since the beginning of time man has evidenced discon-
tent with his physical environment and the barriers that
it has thrown up against him. Thus, down through the ages,
he has wrought changes which have in effect extended his
mastery over his physical environment. He has built dams
to make productive the unproductive soil. He has devised
machines to modify the limitations imposed on him by
space and time. He has conceived and used a host of other
mechanical inventions to do his work on a scale that seems
almost fantastic. But man's social progress - his ability
to live _in_ and _with_ the group - has not been characterized

by such spectacular improvement.

Is it not just as important to build peace into the social environment where wars have existed? Should man not be just as interested in discovering and overcoming the forces which produce bloody revolutions and wars, economic depressions, race riots and broken families? What about the governing of men? Why hasn't man isolated those social forces which will provide a maximum of satisfactions for human beings governed in an organized society? Before these projects may proceed, man must first discover the dynamic principles which are fundamental in the interaction between individuals in their social environment.

A liberated social science must provide many of the answers. Some of the answers must come from the social psychologists - those who are concerned with the study of man in his social environment. But in view of the job that needs to be done, social psychology up until very recently has been most backward and has had little to offer for successfully coping with the challenging and often ominous social environment.

It is true that times are changing this backwardness, largely through the application of the experimental method to the problems of social adjustment. To the social psychology of the theorist, who strives to explain and relate

the scattered happenings of everyday life, has been added

the experimental social psychology of the worker in the

laboratory and, more recently, in the "field."[1] There are

social scientists who would deny the value of carrying on

field experiments in the life situation until psychology

first has discovered all there is to know about the re-

actions of men under rigid and controlled conditions. Then,

having discovered the nature of individual behavior, they

would apply that knowledge.[2] This is a fallacy; it involves

the negation of experience. The subtleties of group co-

operation, the delicate interlacings, moral suasion, and

the whole artistry of social adjustment demand a like con-

sideration. Group experiments and coordinated studies of

men in the world at large must be carried on to supplement

the inquiries into the nature of the individual. To the

very process of discovery there must be linked the activity

of application. For the very meaning of discoveries is in-

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[1] "A field experiment is a research project in which
variables of group life are manipulated and controlled in
a life setting outside the laboratory." Cf. R. Lippitt and
J.R.P. French, "Research and Training," The Group, Vol. 10,
No. 2 (January, 1948), p. 11.

[2] The view that social psychology is applied indi-
vidual psychology was maintained by Lazarus, Steinthal and
by Wundt. Some modern day writers maintain a view essen-
tially similar.

separable from their social relationships. The whole man
in his social, or complete, environment is the final ob-
ject of our investigations, not a reacting mechanism in the
precise, formal atmosphere of the laboratory. Although this
concept of man's behavior being understood only in relation-
ship to the social and physical environment has been over-
due; nevertheless, it may be said with a restrained satis-
faction that it is now rather widely accepted and in use.
Ralph Linton demonstrates this interrelatedness with the
following analogy:

> Perhaps the relations of a society, a social
> system, and the individuals who compose the society can
> be made clearer by an analogy. A rope can be ana-
> lyzed into its component strands with respect both
> to its total length and to its content at any point
> in that length. Its structural pattern can also be
> ascertained by observing the spacial relations of the
> various strands at a series of points along its
> length. This pattern will persist in spite of the
> termination of certain strands and the introduction
> of others and will bear little relation to the indi-
> vidual qualities of the various strands - such
> things as their exact length, thickness or color.
> It can be described in the abstract and compared
> with the structural patterns revealed by other ropes.
> A society, in its extension through time, can be
> likened to a rope braided from the short strands
> of individual lives. By studying the social rela-
> tions between individuals and observing the repe-
> titive situations, it becomes possible to deduce
> the structural pattern of the society. This pattern
> tends to persist in spite of the steady overturn
> in the society's content and bears little relation
> to the special qualities of the various individuals
> who occupy places in the society at various times.
> It can be described in the abstract and compared
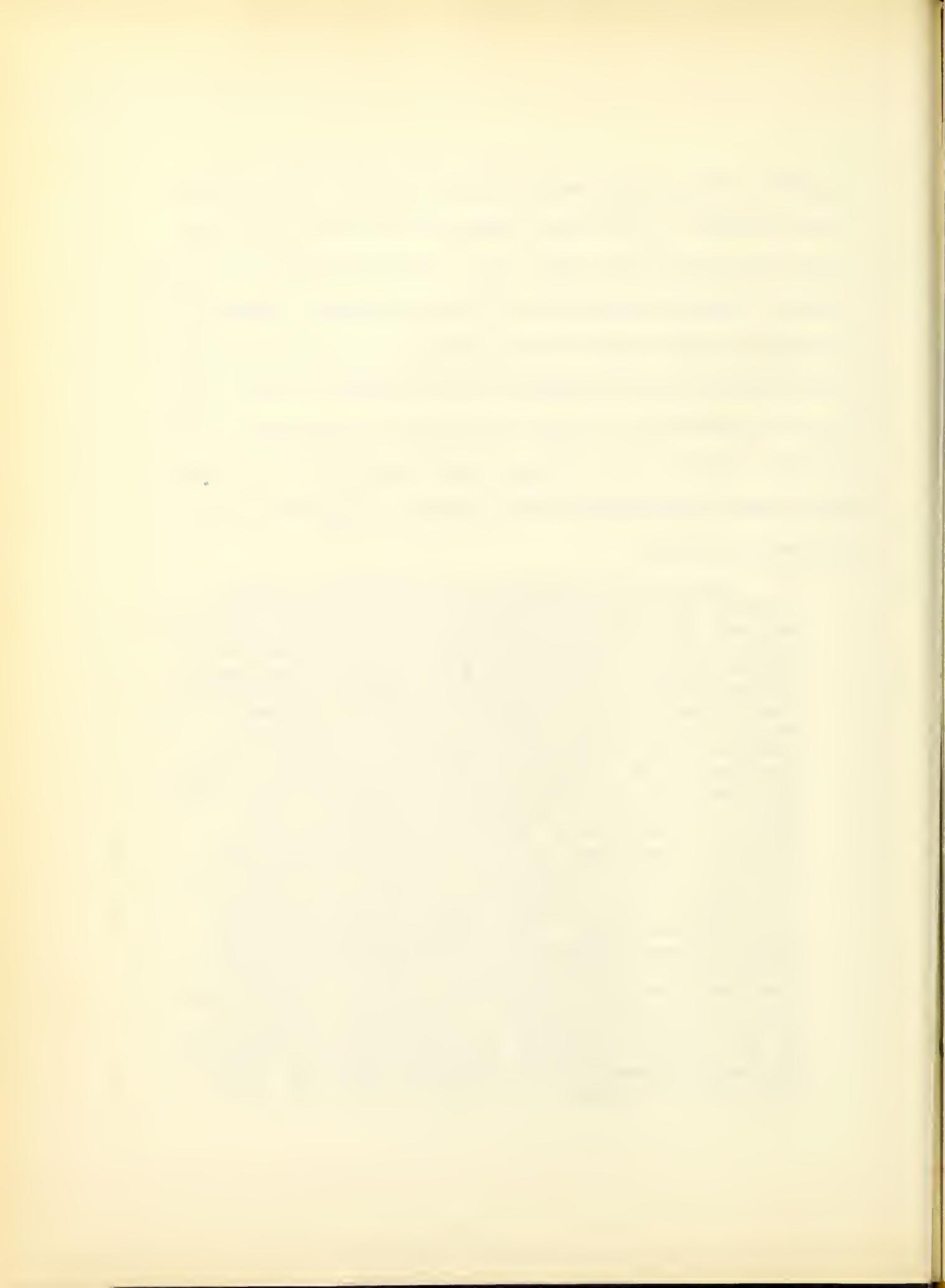
with the structural patterns of other societies.[3]

As shall be noted further on in this study, research
that has every right to be called scientific is now being
done by the social scientists. But much of the dogmatic
thinking within as well as without their ranks persists to
plague their research efforts. Because his field of study
has been hampered by an emotional and self-interested public,
the social scientist has only recently been permitted to
venture hesitatingly into experimentation. Unable to prove
his thesis, his untested product never found public favor
as did the tested hypothesis of the physical scientist.
Within their own ranks there were many who staunchly main-
tained that human lives and emotions did not lend themselves
to the discovery of valid principles or universal patterns
through scientific method. Furthermore, the very emotions
that the social scientist would test had been conditioned
and built in deliberately by the church, the school, the
family to give assurance to institutions which, in some
instances, may be proven to have outlived their usefulness.
Only in very recent years has public opinion swung in favor
of research.

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[3] R. Linton, "A Neglected Aspect of Social Disorganiza-
tion," American Journal of Sociology, 45:870-86, 1940, p.
871.

Within this picture of lagging social understanding,
there has been a gigantic mechanical and industrial develop-
ment. It does not take much imagination to understand the
possibility of the proposition that business management called
forth the public relations practitioner out of the growing
need for social understanding and interpretation -- a con-
dition for which the social scientist might well blame the
vested interest of controlling groups. Certainly the degree
of human cooperation and social knowledge needed to manage
broad industrial operations were not available to the same
extent that the technical means were. Lewin observed that
"to manage a plant or factory, it does not suffice to know
accounting or how to set up sufficient production lines; but
that the cultural habits of the worker in the district in
question, the leadership techniques and the social atmosphere
in the factory, are no less important."

Having in most instances only a "common sense" under-
standing of human nature and not having the equipment of the
social scientist, nevertheless, the public relations prac-
titioner has held forth, doing a job of greater or lesser
social value in accordance with his particular motivations
and knowledge content. But now comes the period of change
when the developments in social science research are becoming
worthy of the attention of the social practitioner, too. There
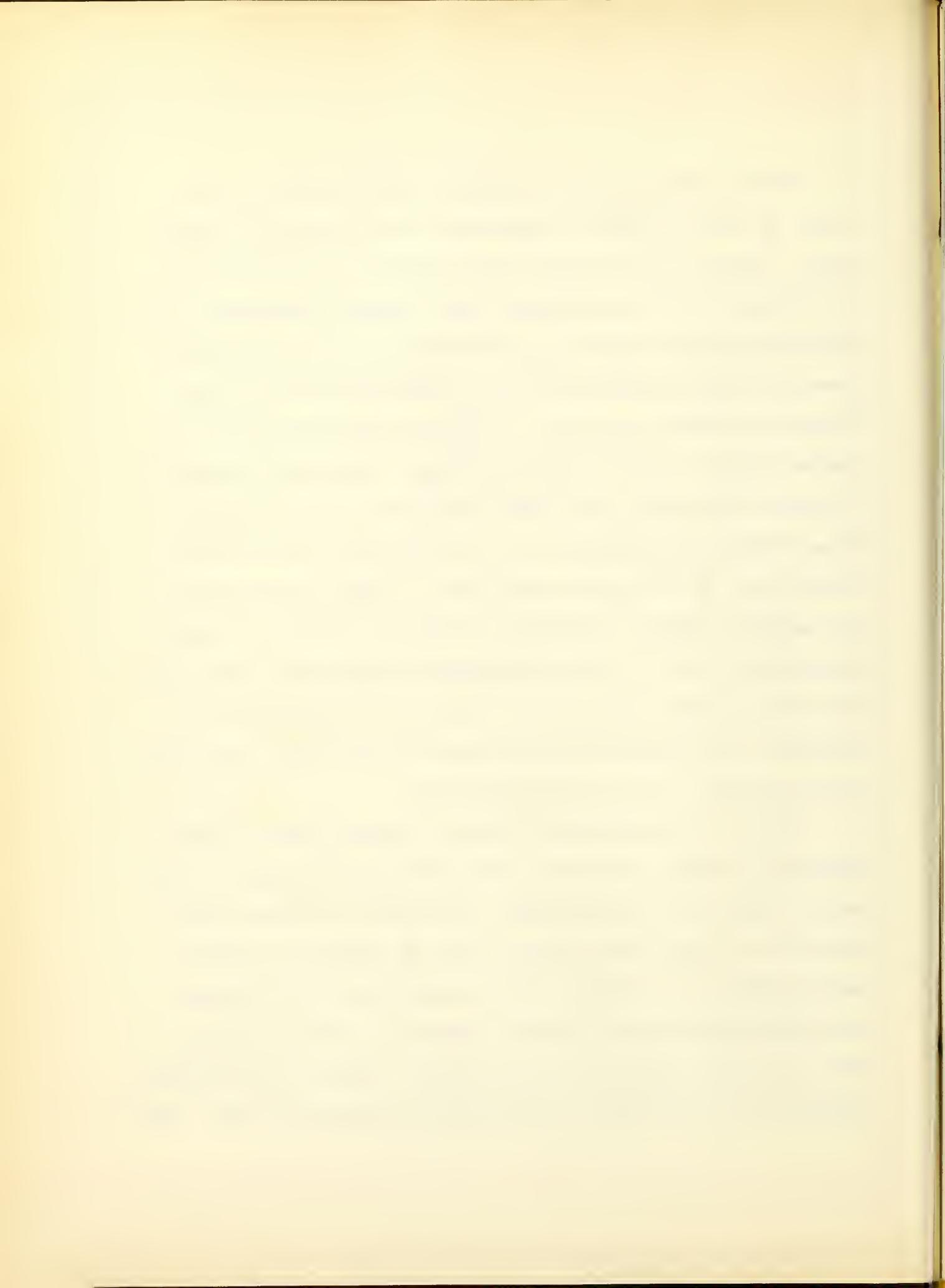
is a real need for that practical social scientist - the
public relations practitioner - to inventory the growing
number of validated concepts dealing with man's relation
to man so that they may be incorporated into the body of
knowledge at his command. To the degree to which he fails
to do this, so will he fall short of his efficiency poten-
tial.

II. KURT LEWIN'S INFLUENCE

It is rather difficult, if not impossible, to consider
the developments in social research that have occurred
during the past few years without recognizing the important
influence of Kurt Lewin and the Research Center for Group
Dynamics where he served as director until his untimely
death in 1947.

Few scientists have been more aware of the needs for
knowledge in the area of human relations than was Lewin.
But more than anything else, he was intensely interested in
the development of a research methodology and technique in
social science which could well deserve to be called _sci-
entific_. The dominant thesis of his life seems to be in-
cluded in his statement:

> I am persuaded that is is possible to undertake
> experiments in sociology which have as much right to
> be called scientific experiments as those in physics
> and chemistry. I am persuaded that there exists a
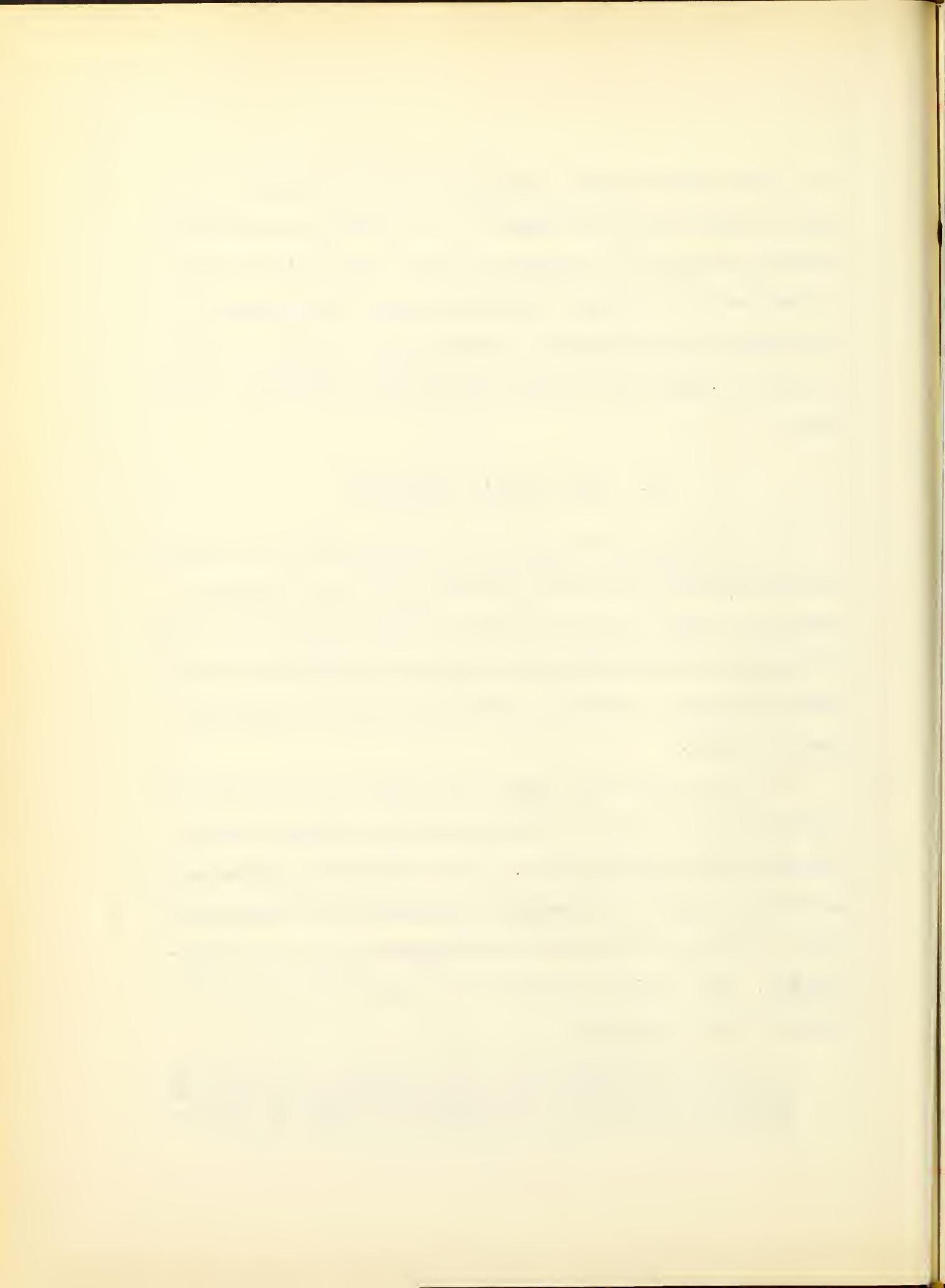
social space which has all the essential prop-
erties of a real empirical space and deserves
as much attention by students of geometry and
mathematics as the physical space, although it is
not a physical one. The perception of social
space and the experimental and conceptual in-
vestigation of the dynamics and laws of the
processes in social space are of fundamental
theoretical and practical importance. [4]

Like McDougall and Freud, Lewin was an influential

systematist and it was undoubtedly this characteristic

which led him to bring mathematics and psychology to-

gether in his topological psychology. [5]

Allport offers the explanation that

Lewin's explanatory concepts are, broadly speaking, of
three types. Many of them are adaptations of
geometry, or, more precisely, topology, a branch
of geometry that treats spacial relationships
without regard to quantitative measurement.
Examples are space of free movement, life space,
region. The second class of concepts are anchored
in the dynamic psychology of the individual (e.g.,
need, aspiration level, satiation). These
latter concepts for the most part refer to
systems of tensions within the person himself.
Whenever Lewin feels it necessary to speak
simultaneously both of these tension systems
within the individual and of the pressures
emanating from the surrounding field, he intro-
duces a third type of concept, such as field
forces (motives clearly depending upon group
pressures), barriers (obstacles to individual action
owing to group restraints), or locomotion
(changing of the individual's position with

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[4] Lewin, Resolving Social Conflicts, op. cit., p. 71.

[5] Lewin, Principles of Topological Psychology, (New
York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1936)

reference to the group). In reality, of course,
these three aspects of his thought are not sep-
arable. All of his concepts . . . . comprise a
well-integrated system.[6]

Other conceptual tools include: group atmosphere,
levels of reality, time perspective, group decision, we-
feeling.[7]

Lewin's methods, though pioneering in a highly con-
troversial research field, slowly won attention. Unlike
the psychologists who preceded him, Lewin felt that truth
alone is an insufficient value for human survival. It is
not enough to find out why people behave as they do, but we
must also discover how they may learn to behave better.

In this development of social psychology in which
Lewin was responsible for so many advances, he inspired
most of the researches in Group Dynamics. It was his idea
that actual experiments on groups could be carried out
under precisely controlled conditions; and in proving this
concept to be correct, Lewin and his students developed
new concepts and techniques which have helped make psy-
chology a science applicable both to real individuals and
real society.

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[6] Lewin, Resolving Social Conflicts, pp 8-9.

[7] Loc. cit.
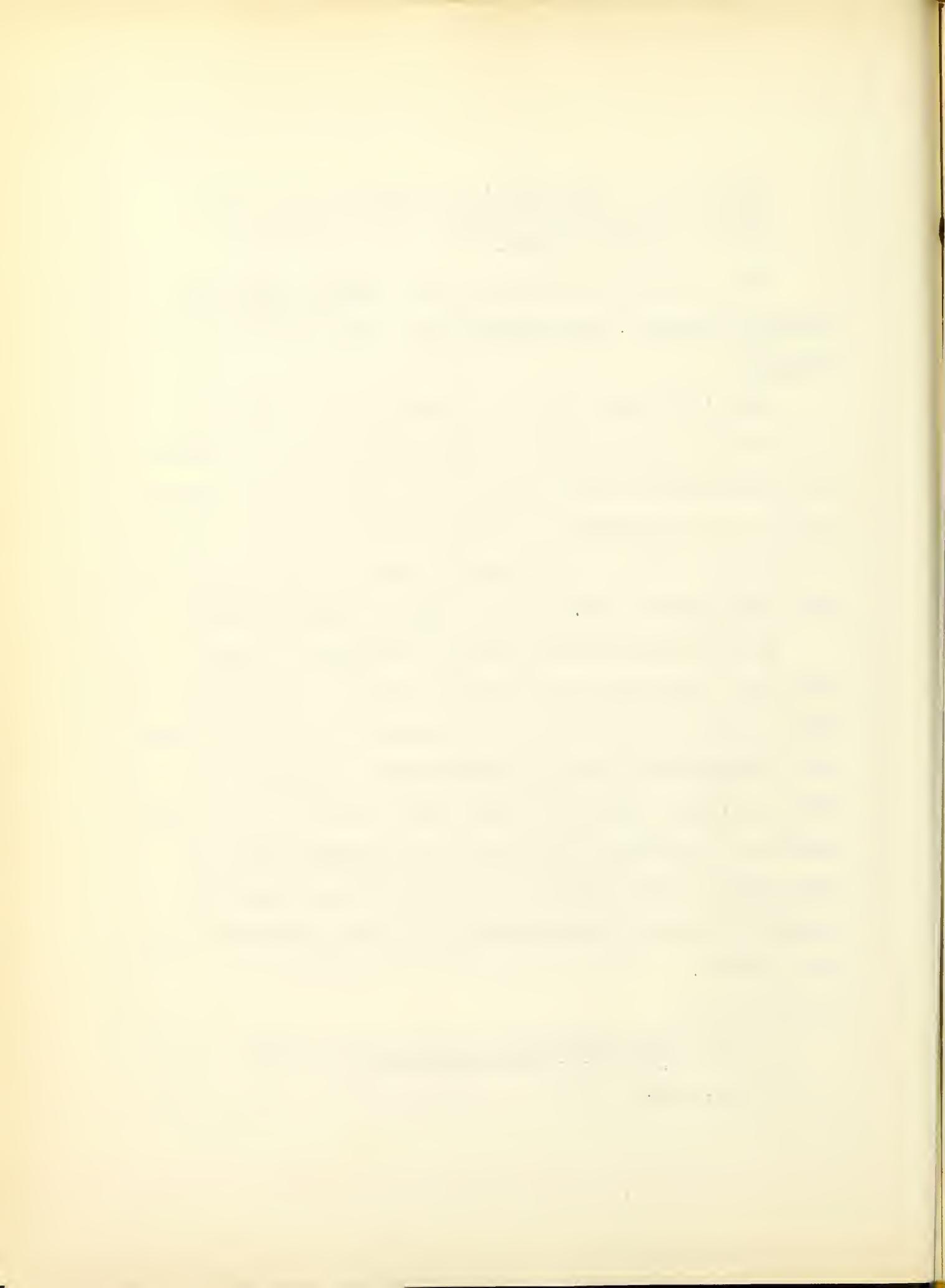
None but the dull or the prejudiced could fail to be thrilled by their initial findings on the effects of authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire types of leadership upon small clubs of boys.[8] Until Lewin's experiments, "democracy" was conceived of in many diverse ways. It was not until he designed his experiment that the dynamics of a democratic social situation became a part of objective knowledge.

There are always those who are still a bit concerned about the discovery of facts which deal with prediction and control of human actions and motivations for fear that this knowledge might be used to enslave or "manipulate." Lewin, too, was aware of the potential danger in this direction, and cautioned

> It seems to be crucial for the progress of social science that the practitioner understand that through social sciences and only through them he can hope to gain the power necessary to do a good job. Unfortunately, there is nothing in social laws and social research which will force the practitioner toward the good. Science gives more freedom and power to both the doctor and the murderer, to democracy and Fascism. The social scientist should recognize his responsibility also in respect to this.[9]

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[8] E.C. Tolman, "Kurt Lewin - 1890-1947," Journal Soc. Iss., Supplement series No. 1, December, 1948, p. 23.

[9] Lewin, Resolving Social Conflicts, op. cit., p. 213.
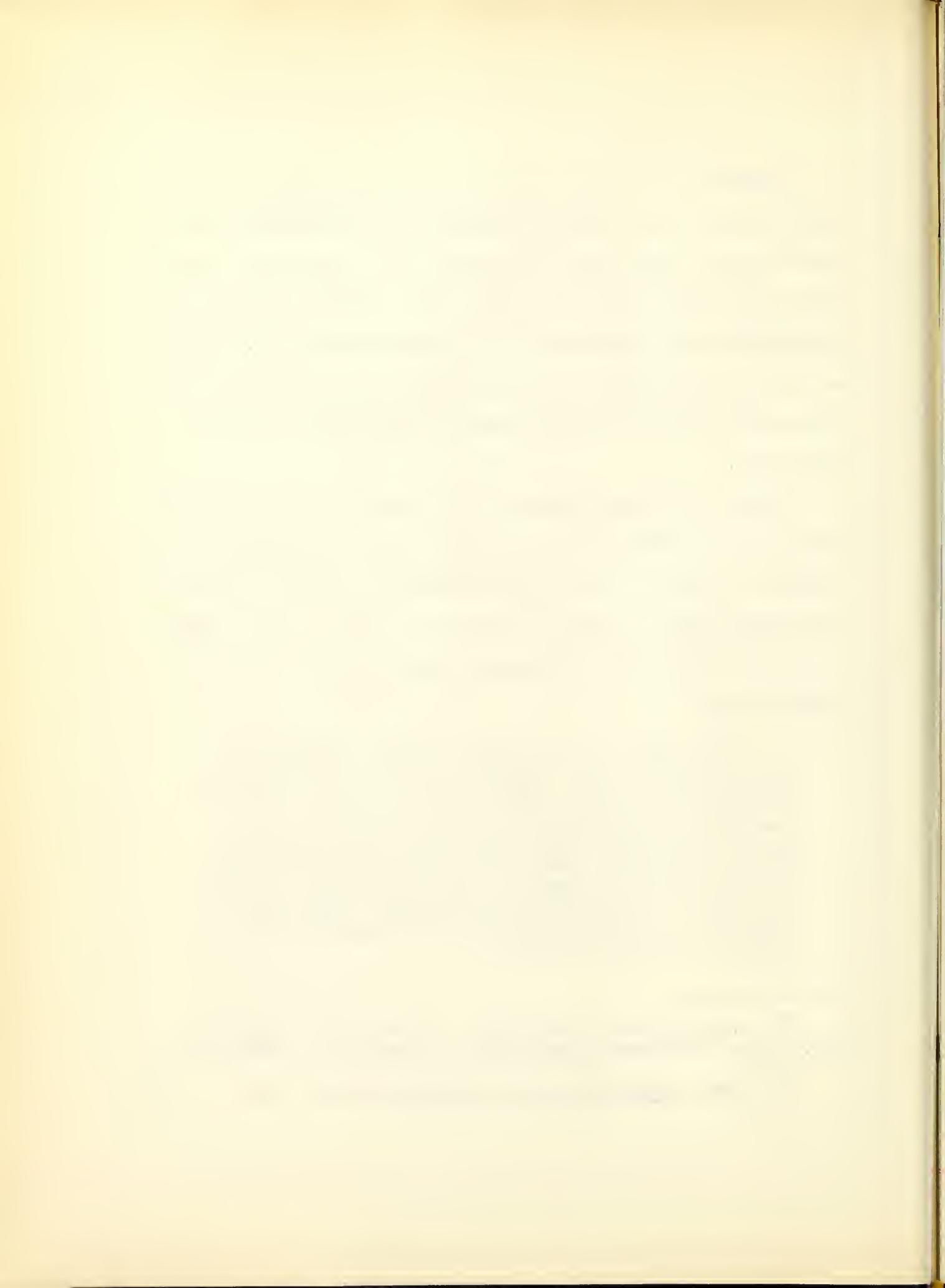
Among the dangers to the advance of social science itself, Lewin noted the "practitioners of all types, politicians and college presidents" who are the admirers of common sense and who "seem to ascribe to the idea that we don't need more social science." Unfortunately, Lewin notes, there are even a number of social scientists who are against a promotion of the social sciences. "I guess there is no other way to convince these people than by producing better social science."[10]

> A second threat to social science, says Lewin,
>
> comes from "groups in power." These people can
> be found in management on any level, among labor
> leaders, among politicians, some branches of
> government, and among members of Congress. Some-
> how or other, they all seem to be possessed by
> the fear they could not do what they want to do
> if they, and others, really knew the facts. I
> think social scientists should be careful to dis-
> tinguish between the legitimate and the not
> legitimate elements behind this fear.[11]

Lewin's caution to the social scientist includes the public relations practitioner, too. Many a public relations man risks the displeasure of his employer or client by insisting-even by such a method as presenting substantiating empirical evidence- on the advisability of instituting innovations in production methods, or for dealing with

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10 Loc. cit.

11 Loc. cit.
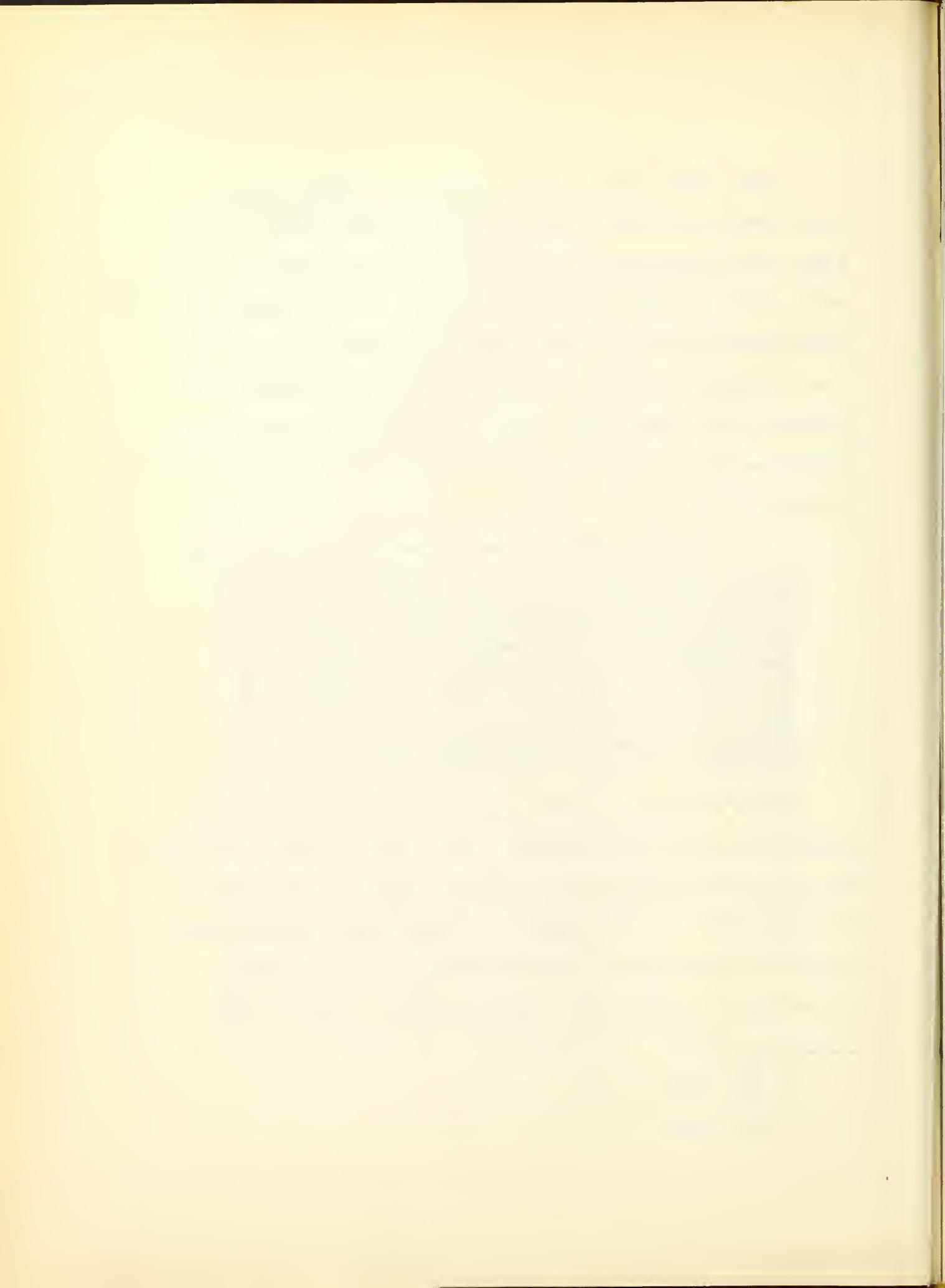
legitimate unions and maintaining the highest employment
standards in terms of hours, conditions, wages and the psy-
chological needs of the employees.[12] It is a part of the
basic problem of social science, which group dynamics is
helping to solve, that persons will accept empirical laws or
facts derived from the physical sciences, while being quite
literally unable to accept equally well validated empirical
evidence or principles pertaining to human behavior.

III. THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD

Industry, the biggest buyer of public relations services,
has accepted the validity of the scientific method in
industrial research. This has not always been the case. The
following illustrates the point:

> An American steel maker in a small and remote
> town, years ago, when his directors decided that
> their interests might be furthered if he were to
> employ a chemist, wrote back: "Send down one who
> can play the violin. We can stand his damned
> nonsense in the daytime, if he will amuse us in
> the evening."[13]

Few would deny that J.J. Carty's prediction made a
half century ago is a reality today:

In the present state of the world's development

12 Leila A. Sussman, "The Public Relations Movement
in America," Unpublished Master's thesis, University of
Chicago, March, 1947. p. 3.

13 A.D. Little, Relation of Research to Industrial
Development, address before Canadian Mfgrs. Ass., Toronto
(Boston: private printing, 1917), p. 3.
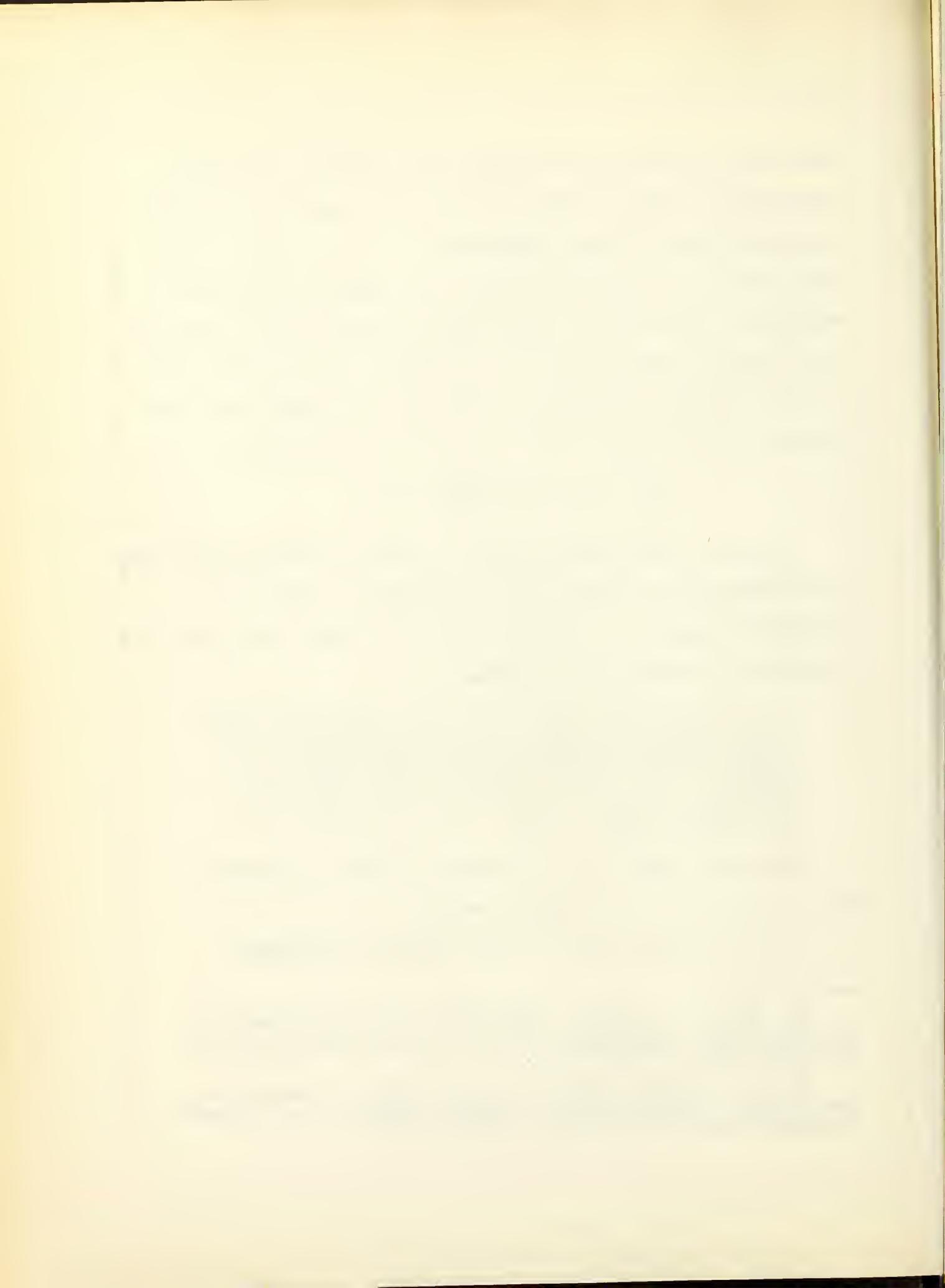
there is nothing which can do more to advance
American industry than the adoption by our manu-
facturers generally of industrial research con-
ducted on scientific principles . . . . Those
who are the first to avail themselves of the
benefits of industrial research will obtain such
a lead over their competitors that we may look
forward to the time when the advantages of in-
dustrial research will be recognized by all.[14]

There seems to be no logical reason to suppose that

business and industry will be less interested in accepting

and utilizing the applicable results of social research

than they have physical research. The apparent difference

between what-is-known and what-is-done in social management

may be attributed more to the failure of communication be-

tween the social scientists and the industrial world than to

any prejudices against social science.[15]

Until 1927 when research was undertaken by Western

Electric at Hawthorne, there had been few attempts to study

the _social_ conditions of work. It is a strange fact that

two wars have done more to advance research into the dy-

namics of groups than anything else. Until the first World

War, Mayo and Henderson report, "no one had ever sufficiently

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[14] _Ibid._, p. 4.

[15] A number of significant studies in group dynamics
in the industrial situation have been done at the Harwood
Mfg. Corp., Marion, Virginia. These have received little
or no publicity in publications other than scientific
journals.
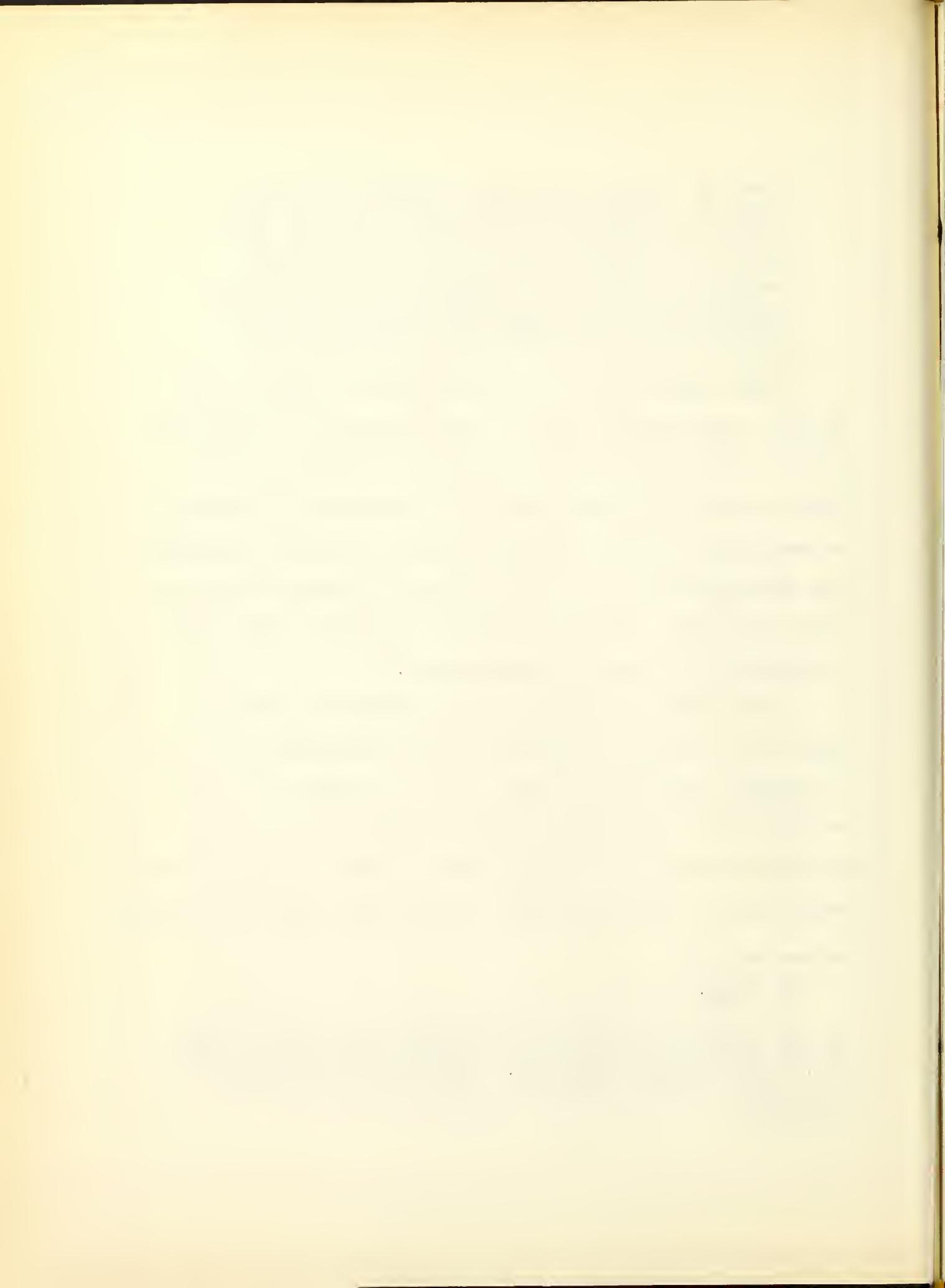
considered the enormous demand upon industry that would be

made by a war machine . . . . nor . . . . upon those workers

to provide the supplies."[16]

> The authorities in England speedily became
> aware of a "national lack of knowledge of the
> primary laws governing human efficiency". In
> particular, there was "need for scientific study
> of the hours of work and other conditions of
> labor likely to produce the maximum output at
> which the effort of the whole people was aimed".
> The actual conditions of work set in the munition
> factories were, in the early days of the struggle,
> admitted to be progressively detrimental to the
> worker and consequently unfavorable to that
> maintenance of output for long periods upon
> which success in large part depended.[17]

And during the second World War, it was the demand for

practical solutions to pressing problems arising out of

exceedingly important social interaction which caused the

Research Center in Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts

Institute of Technology to be established. These problems

were considered highly important to the winning of the war

and the research was financed through a contract with the

Office of Naval Research.

Much of the research reported in this study either came

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[16] L.J. Henderson and Elton Mayo, "The Effects of
Social Environment," Journal of Industrial Hygiene and
Toxic., Vol. 18, No. 7, (September,1936), p. 401.

[17] Loc. cit.

out of the Research Center or was reported by persons who have been or still are connected with that establishment. Their results have been based, this study maintains, upon methods and procedures which have every right to be considered scientific. That brings us to a discussion of what is the scientific method, and can it be applied to social phenomana?

Social Science. "Social science," says Stuart Chase, "is the use of the scientific method to solve questions of human relations. 'Science' goes with the method, not with the subject matter."[18] Broadly speaking, the scientific method applied to the social sciences may be best characterized by "judicious and systematic observation, verification, classification, and interpretation of social phenomena."[19] The point that Chase makes is important because any attempt to define science in terms other than method brings only confusion. Most works on scientific method and procedure seem to stress the point that science is a unity and that the various sciences are merely conveniences to designate the particular type of problems with which they deal. Karl

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[18] Stuart Chase, op. cit., p. 11.

[19] George A. Lundberg, Social Research, (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1942), p. 1.
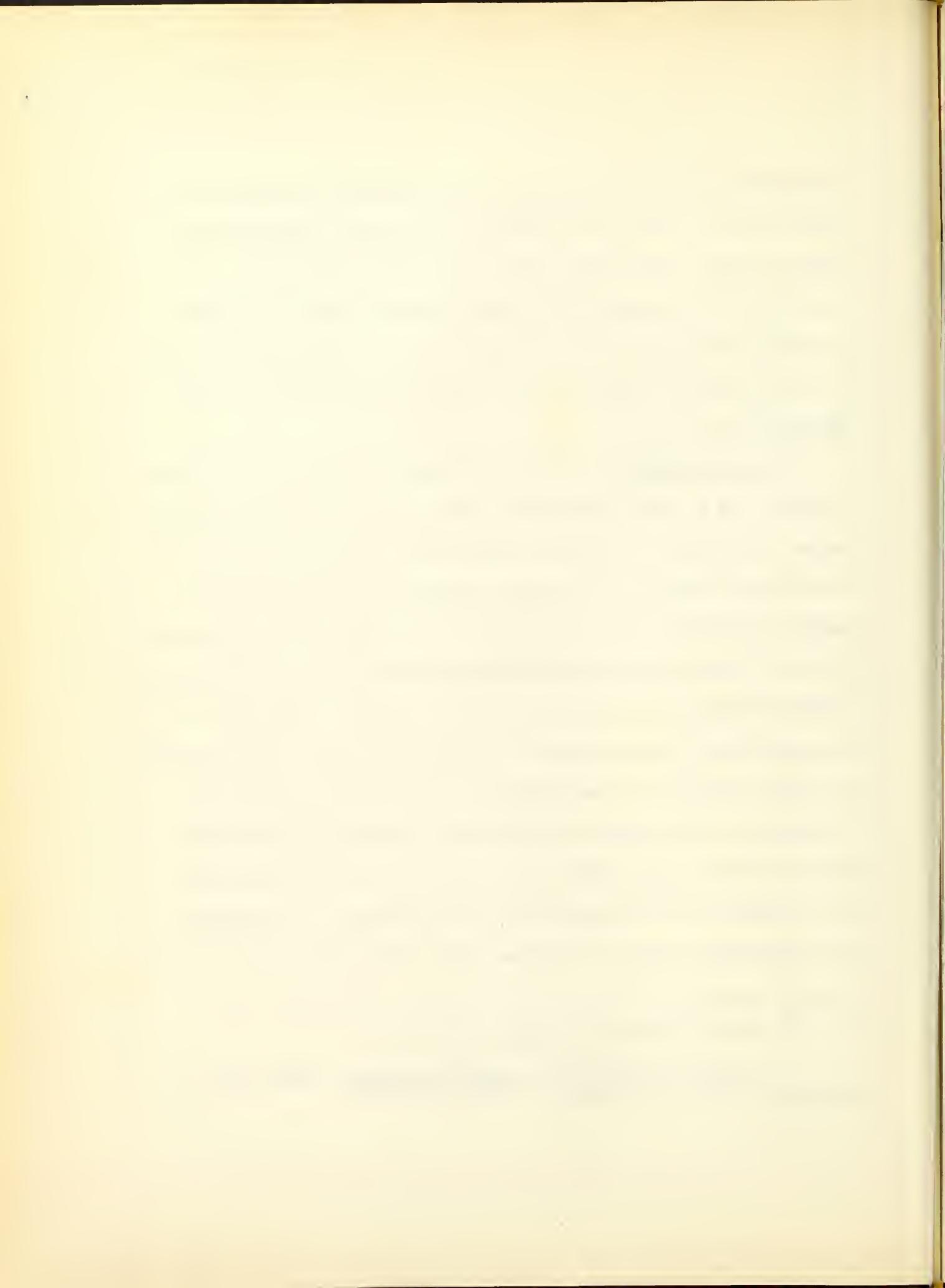
Pearson says:

> The scientific method is one and the same in
> all branches. . . . The Unity of all science con-
> sists in its method, not in its material alone.
> The man who classifies facts of any kind whatsoever,
> who sees their mutual relation and describes their
> consequences, is applying the scientific method
> and is a man of science. The facts may belong to
> the past history of mankind, to the social sta-
> tistics of our great cities, to the atmosphere
> of the most distant stars, to the digestive
> organs of a worm or to the life of a scarcely
> visible bacillus. It is not the facts themselves
> which make science, but the method by which they
> are dealt with.[20]

All that the term "science" as applied to a particular

field comes to mean is a field which has been studied

according to certain principles, i.e., according to sci-

entific method. If what we know about a particular field

has been arrived at by such a method, and if what we know

can be useful in prediction and control in this field, then

the knowledge may be thought of as a science. The eventual

test of how thoroughly the scientific method has been

applied, comes at the point of success or failure in pre-

dicting behavior.

Of course, there are various levels of application of

the scientific method because it may readily be observed

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[20] Karl Pearson, The Grammar of Science, (Third
Edition, London: A. and C. Black, 1911), pp 10, 12.
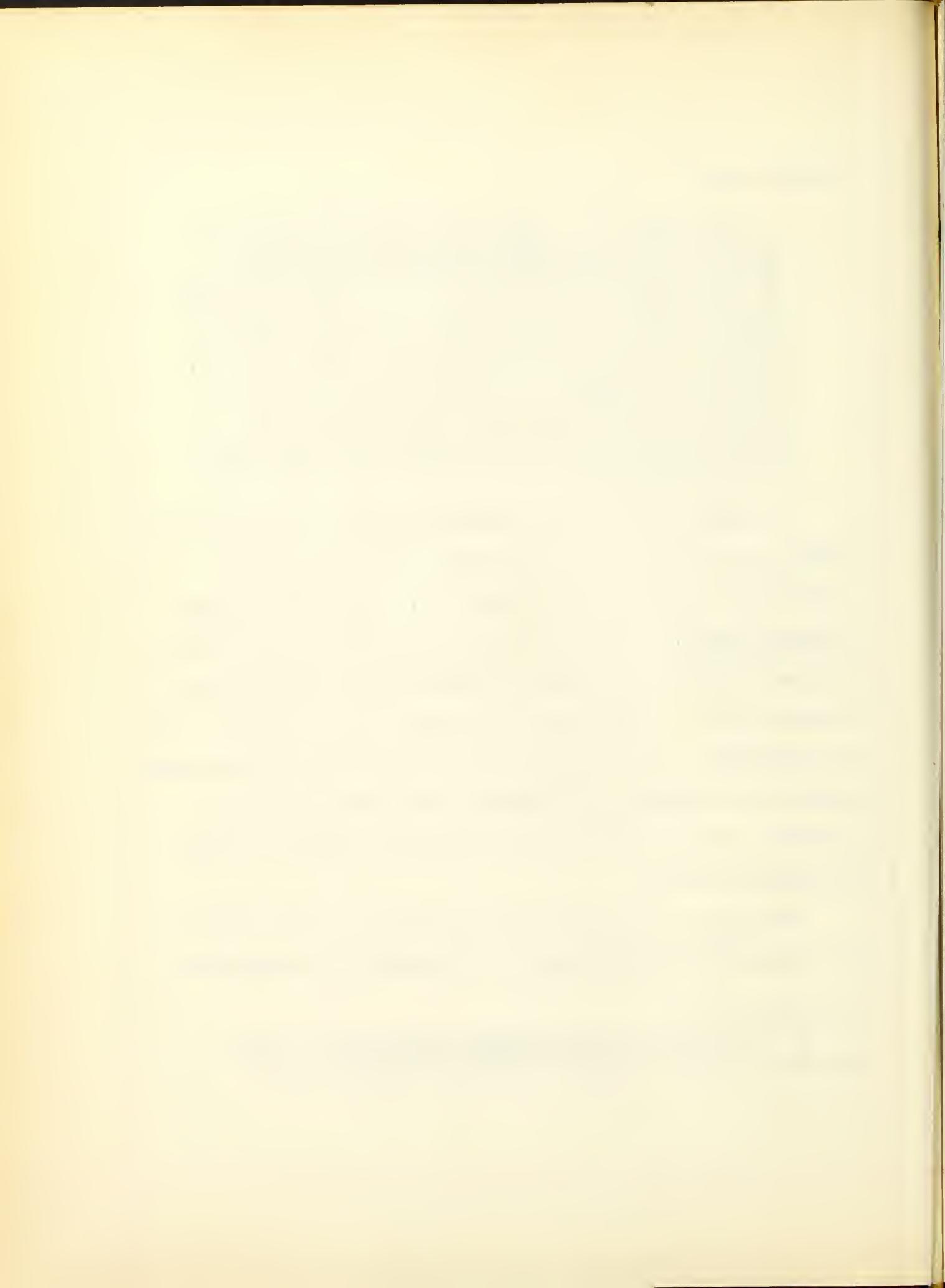
that the characteristics of the scientific method listed
above in paragraph one are activities which most of us
claim to perform during the daily routine of everyday living.
Briefly, these levels may be said to differ mainly in the
degree of "formality, rigorousness, verifiability, and
general validity of the latter."[21]

J. F. Brown points out that:

> Even if men everywhere were freed from their
> religious beliefs and their philosophical pre-
> judices against science, progress would be slow.
> It would of course be immeasurably more rapid
> than it is now, but to make science requires
> patience, honesty, and, what is perhaps more
> important, a great deal of highly specialized
> training.[22]

Even when all the requirements that Brown and Lundberg
set up are met, there are other factors which may operate
to invalidate research findings, e.g., false perceptions or
observations on the part of the scientist as well as deep
seated biases which may be difficult to discern but which
operate against a scientific result. Frequently the ob-
servations of two scientists will differ. When this occurs,
there are ways to check their difference other than by
quarreling, which proves nothing in the end. The only

[21] Lundberg, op. cit., pp. 5, 6.

[22] Psychology and the Social Order, (New York: McGraw-
Hill Book Company, Inc., 1936), p. 15.
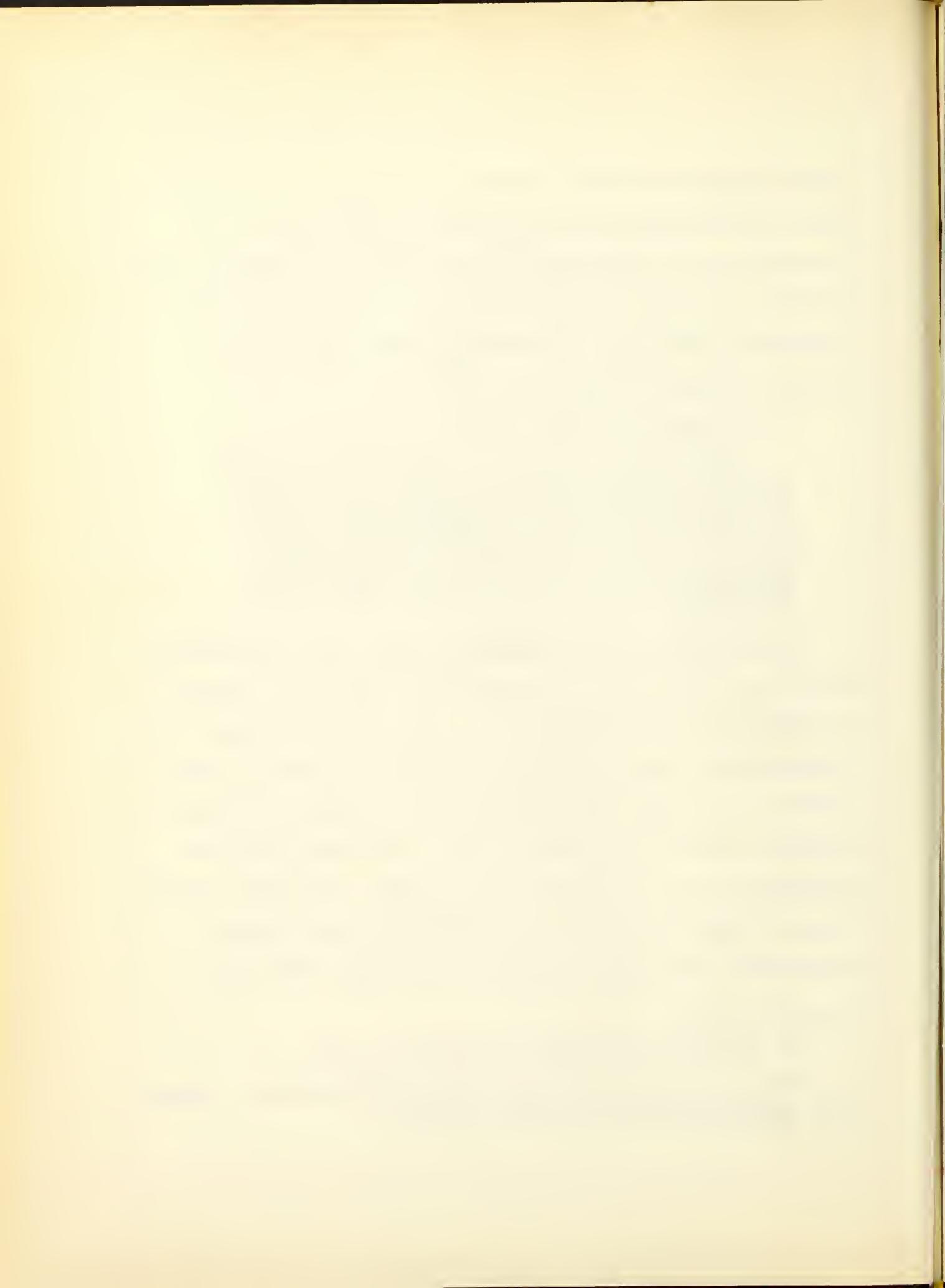
answer to the lack of clear scientific determination is

. . . . farther application of the scientific methods.

Checking is easier to do in the physical than in the social

sciences.

Lundberg suggests:

First of all, it can be determined whether each
scientist uses the same definitions . . . Secondly,
the logical steps can be checked against the
accepted rules of reasoning . . . Thirdly, if the
verification of the deductions involves conditions
of observation which are impractical or impossible
of attainment, the theory is metaphysical rather
than scientific. Finally, if the deduced result
is not corroborated when the conditions of the
theory are fulfilled, the theory is false. . . .
To bring harmony between theory and observation
it may be necessary to change the postulates,
definitions, and/or reasoning, assuming now
that the observation is reliable.[23]

From all indications and from the writing on the sub-

ject, it seems to be rather definitely established that the

scientific method can be applied to the study of social

phenomena of a wide variety. In the past, there has been a

great reluctance to submit social phenomena to the sci-

entific method.[24] This is not completely untrue even now in

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[23] Lundberg, Op. cit., p. 8.

[24] There is a certain, acceptable series of steps that
must be taken if research is to be considered scientific.
These steps include (1) setting up a working hypothesis
(2) observing and recording the data (3) classification and
organization of the data, and (4) formulation of the gener-
alization (from Lundberg, pp. 9, 10).

our own more enlightened period. Where formulations based on research in the physical sciences have constantly undergone correction and change, it has been felt that such a procedure in the social sciences would lead to serious disaster since "it was dangerous to tamper with human lives and emotions."

Another question which has relevance here is: can research in the social sciences be socially useful as well as scientifically meaningful? Before passing on to the next section of this chapter of the thesis, it might be well to set up the criteria upon which the answer to this question might be based. Such criteria are desirable and necessary if this study is going to establish the implied assumption that research in group dynamics is both socially useful and scientifically meaningful. Selltiz and Cook[25] set up the following criteria:

1) To be socially useful

    a. research must deal with problems that have present social consequences or that are likely to demand solution within the near future . . . e.g., labor-management relations, the use of leisure in an atomic age, the treatment of minority groups.

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[25] Claire Selltiz, and Stuart W. Cook, "Can Research in Social Science be Both Socially Useful and Scientifically Meaningful?", American Soc. Review, Vol. 13, no. 4 (August, 1948), pp. 454-459.

b.   The results of research must be applicable
in concrete social situations . . . . . i.e.,
To what extent, and in what ways can factory
operations be changed so that the individual
would find more meaning and more satisfaction
in his work? What forms of labor-management
relations help to restore the workers' feeling
of self-determination.

c.   investigations must be carried out in such
a way as to stimulate application of their
results in practical social situations . . . .
i.e., the gap between what-is-known and what-
is-done has become one of the most remarked-
upon phenomena of our times.

2) To be scientifically meaningful

a.   investigations must involve the systematic
formulation and verification of hypotheses.

b.   research must be carried out and described
in such a way that it can be repeated and the
findings checked.

c.   research must result in a generalization or
principle which is not limited to the immediate
setting of the particular investigation.

IV.   SPECIAL TOOLS

Except in data that admit quantitative analysis - a

comparison of completed work units or tasks - the use of

observation as a research technique is subject to the

usual errors of human bias and false perception.   These

errors continue to reduce the objectivity of research results

regardless of the caution taken against them by well-meaning

experimenters.

Since observation as a technique plays such an important role in the gathering of data on the interpersonal relations of individuals in social interaction, there has been a need for reducing the errors inserted by the human factor.

The most used methods in studying the social situation are: observation, intensive interview, and sociometry. The latter is a method developed by Moreno[26] of analyzing individual status in a group structure and is a relatively simple technique although susceptible to wide margins of error unless used with great care and skill. Although practically unused in industry, it has a number of possibilities for fruitful application.[27]

In research which calls for the content analysis of interaction of persons in small groups (group therapy, group discussion, problem solving, policy formation for education, training work, recreation), several instruments have been devised:

The Interaction Recorder: This apparatus, designed by

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[26] J.L. Moreno, Who Shall Survive? A New Approach to the Problem of Human Interrelations, (Washington: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Company, 1934).

[27] Normal R.F. Maier, Psychology in Industry, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1946), p. 100 ff.
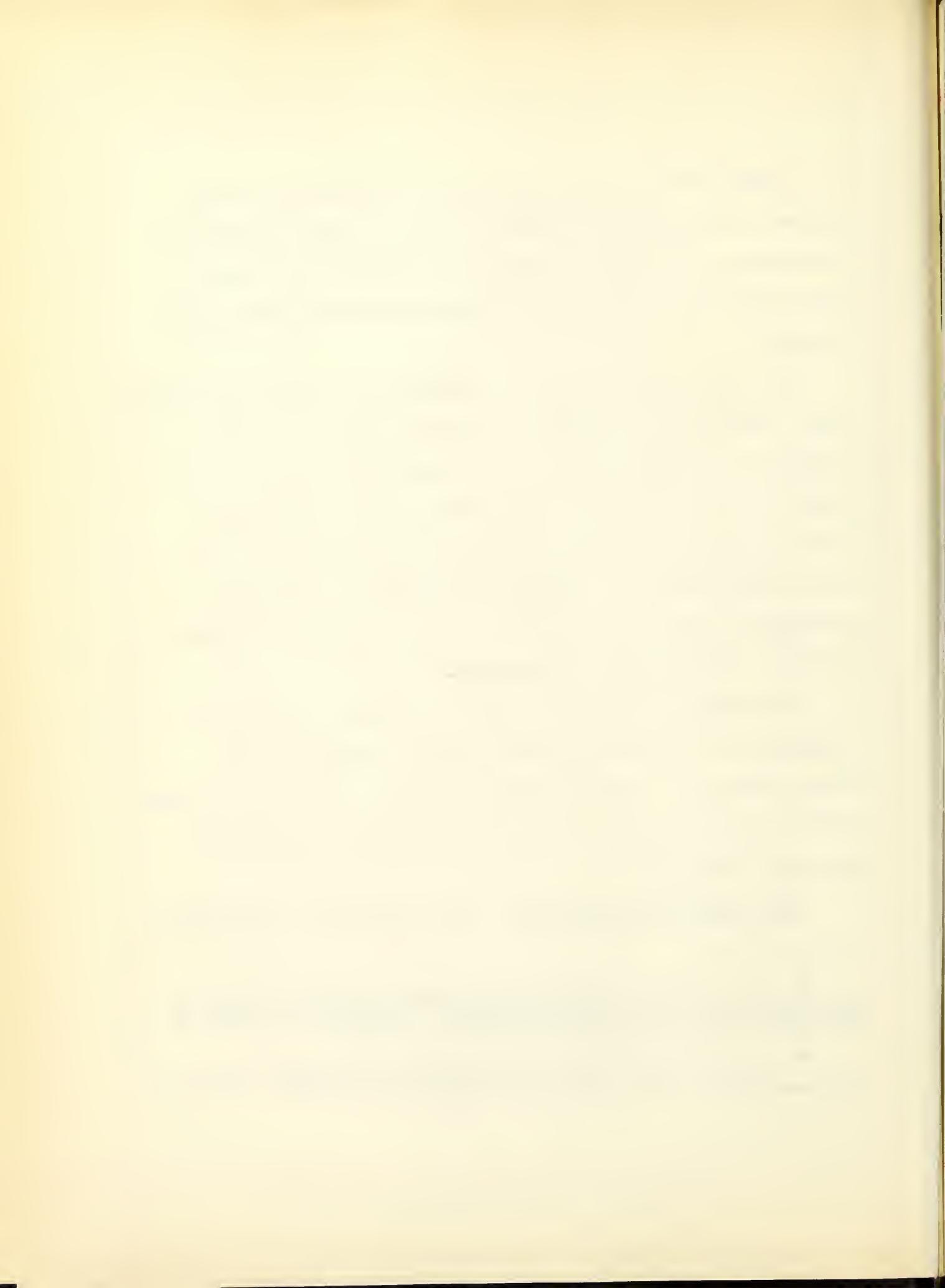
Robert F. Bales at Harvard University, makes it possible for the observer to record behavior in terms of a check list of various "pre-categorized" behavior, and maintain his recording in the original temporal sequence. This is effected by a marking tape of paper 18" wide moving at a constant speed of 3" per minute. Analysis of the temporal sequence can be made directly from the tape or the scores can be transferred to I.B.M. punch cards for analysis.[28] Those unfamiliar with the problems of recording interaction have criticized the apparent fallacy of categorizing behavior. This charge should not be passed off lightly, but the answer lies in the fact that the recorder _is_ an improvement in the method. The degree to which this instrument will be unsatisfactory is related to the demands of each individual research project for which it may be used.

Adult-Youth Participation Sheet. This observation instrument was devised by Ronold Lippit and Alvin Zander for greater objectivity in reporting group behavior. The usefulness of former accounts, subjective and narrative, have varied with the individual differences in the perception of the recorders. This observation device yields

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[28] Robert F. Bales and Henry Gerbrands, "The Interaction Recorder,'" Human Relations, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1948, pp. 456-463.
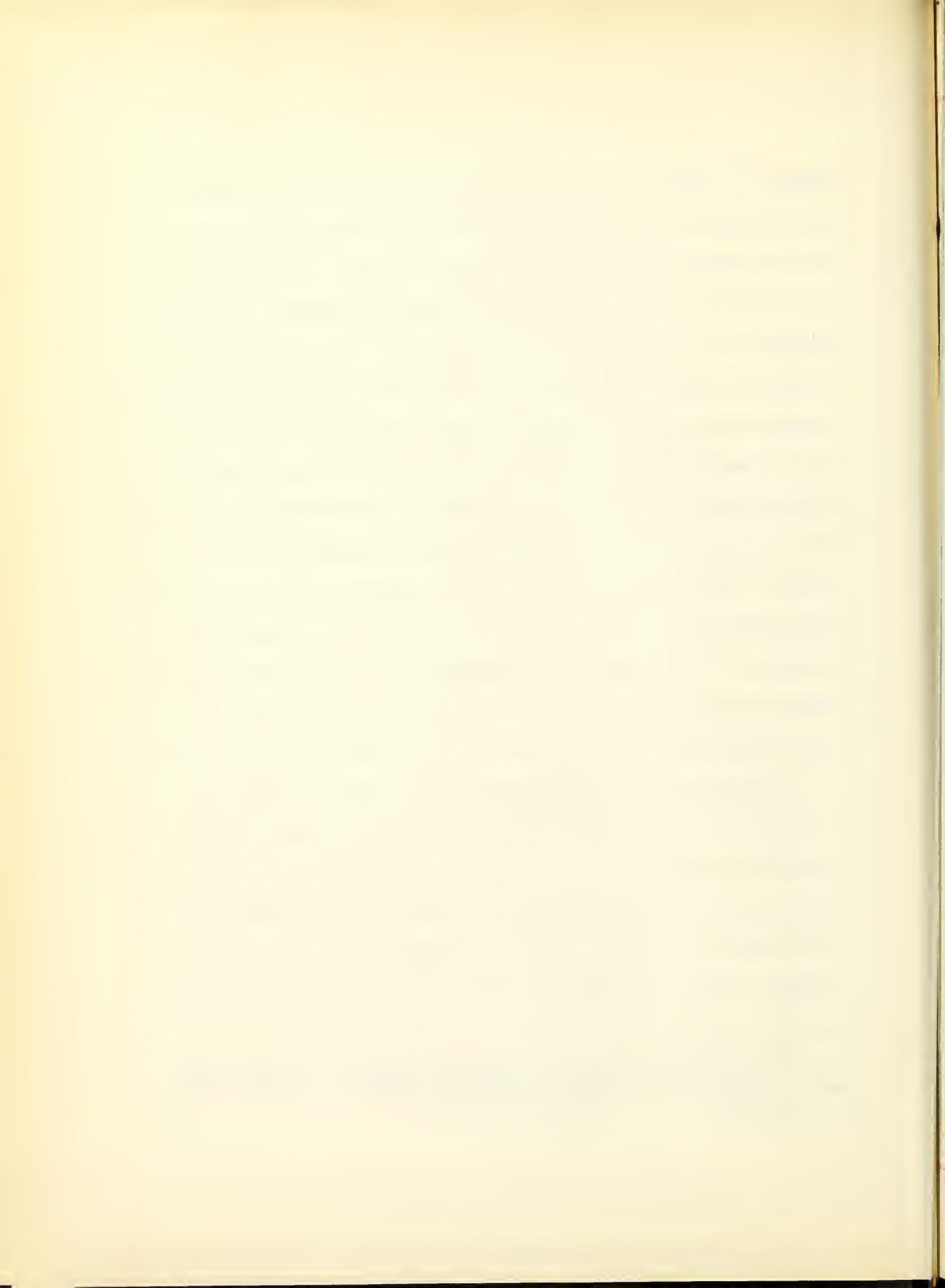
some 40 different kinds of data about the group. This
instrument, like the Interaction Recorder, provides a means
of observation of an event of activity in relation to time.
The narrative later produced from the sheet has the "whole-
ness" of the narrative of the well-trained observer plus
the advantage of "quantitative facts which make the com-
pleted case more trustworthy and useful."[29]

Discussion Interaction Record Form. Although not too
thoroughly tested, this Form promises to increase the degree
of objectivity in reporting discussion interaction. It was
devised by Arthur L. Bryant at Boston University and the
only report of it is in his unpublished Master's thesis.[30]
As a result of his tests he concludes that "interaction in
a discussion group can reliably be measured and the Form
is a simple and reliable method."

Sociometry. Moreno[31] has developed a quantitative
method of analyzing social dynamics and subtle inter-
relationships of social groups which he has called sociometry.

29   Alvin F. Zander, "The WP Club: and Objective Case
Study of a Group," Human Relations, Vol. 1, No. 3 (1948)
pp. 321-332.

30   The Development and Evaluation of an Instrument for
Measuring Discussion Interaction, Unpublished Master's
Thesis, Boston University, 1949.

31 Moreno, op. cit.
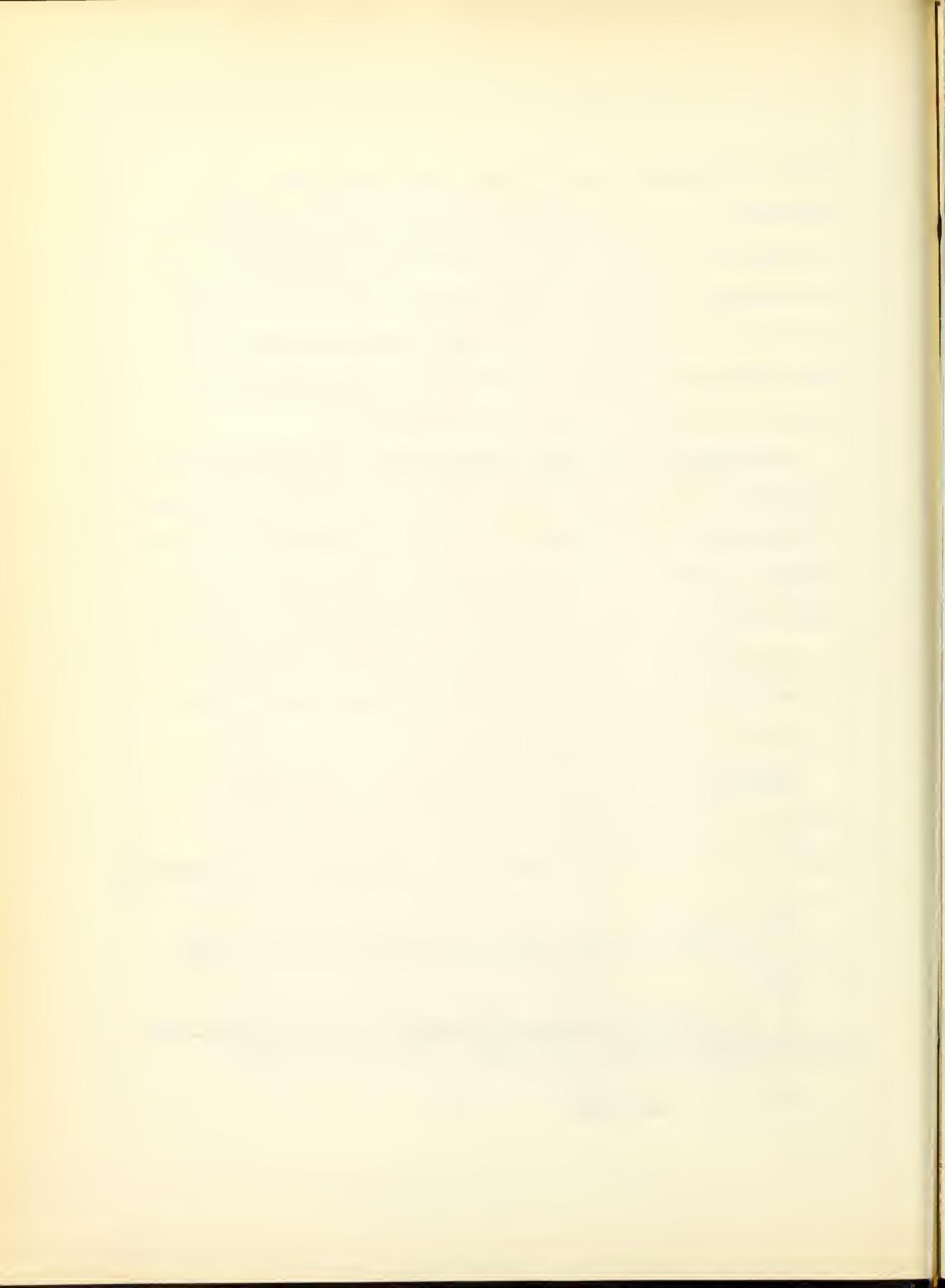
Moreno's original use of sociometry developed as a schematic means of showing the interpersonal relations of individuals not associated in a group situation. Sociometry used in connection with other methods, e.g., interview and observation, is useful to the social scientist in graphically picturing certain group relationships as they exist at a particular moment in time. The instrument used to measure the amount of organization shown by a social group is called a sociometric test. Such a test determines the position of each individual in the group in which he has a definite function, e.g., play group, political group, work group or club. The test merely provides group members with an opportunity to choose among themselves for associations in specific projects or situations. The results are then arranged into a sociogram, a graphic presentation of the test results.[32]

The sociometric method then becomes a means by which the social scientist may understand the major lines of communication between the members of a group, the pattern of their attractions and rejections. But since these relationships are dynamic, the results may apply only at the time the test

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[32] See Figure I.
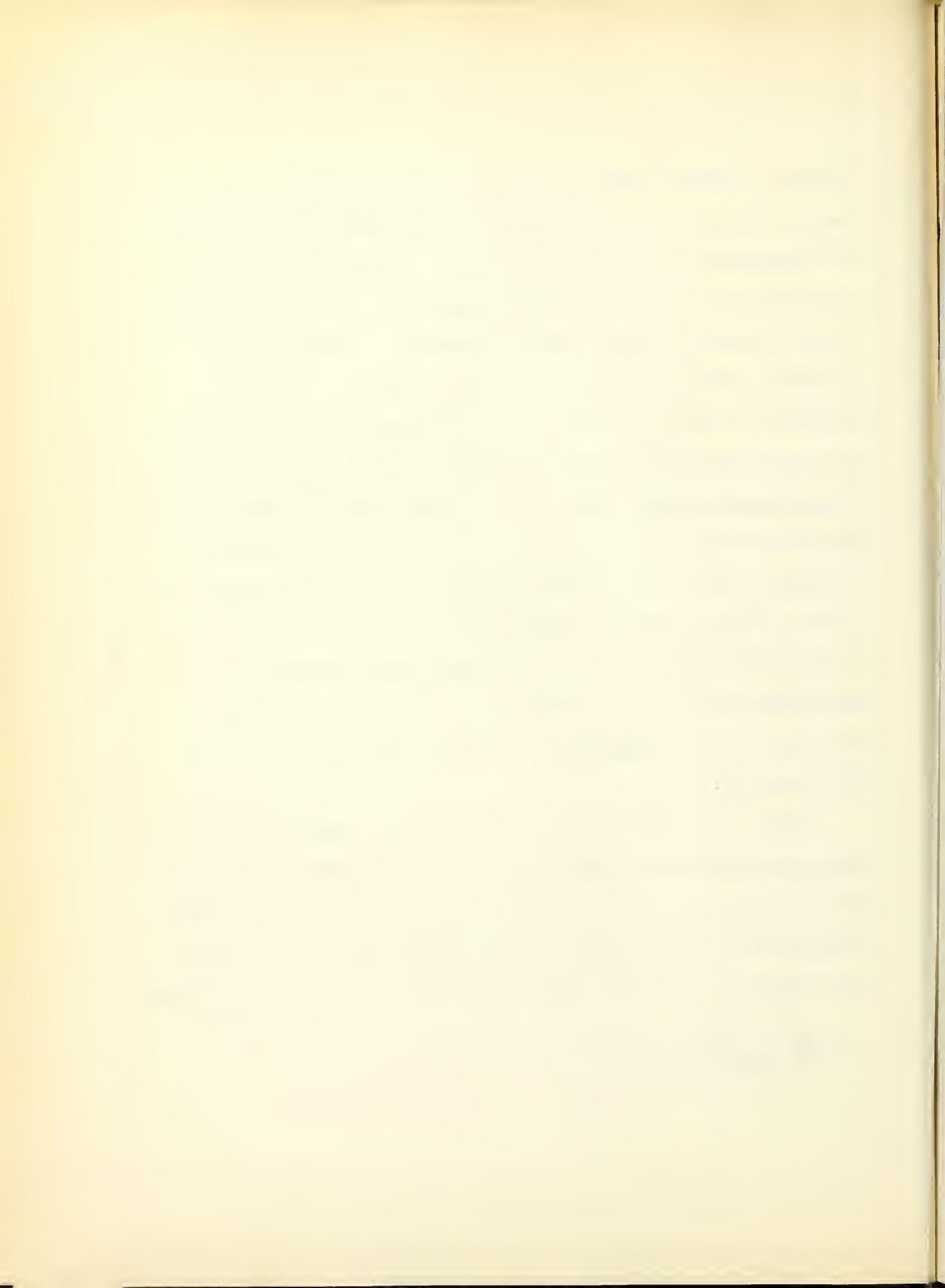
FIGURE 1. SOCIOGRAM OF A GROUP OF TEN WORKMAN
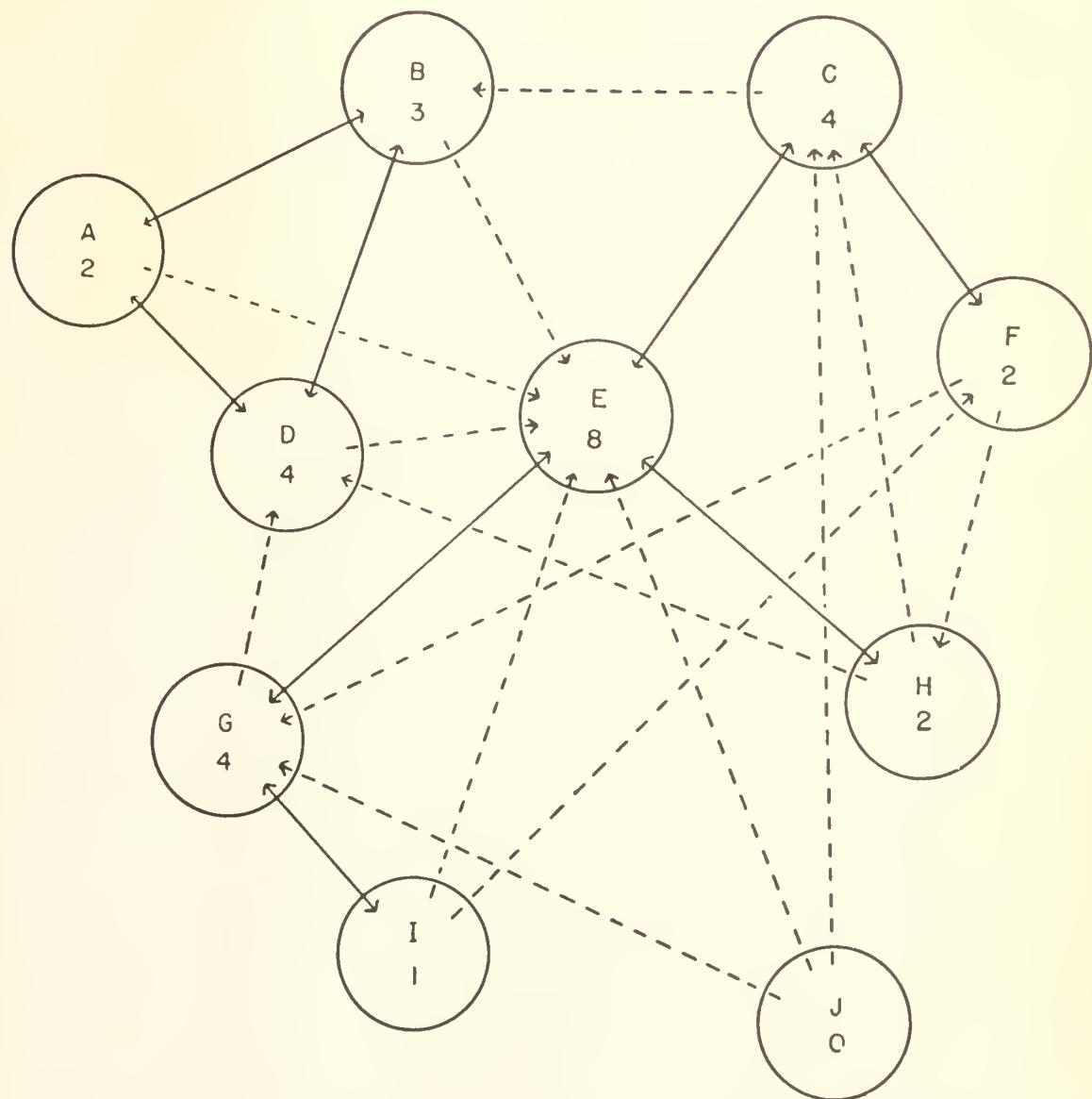
    Each workman is represented by a circle, the letters
of the alphabet being substituted for names. The numer-
als in the circles show the number of votes each man
received from his companions. The arrows indicate the
direction of the choices. Solid and broken lines desig-
nate mutual choices and one-way preferences, respect-
ively. A, B, and D form a triangle and J is an isolate.
(From Maier, op. cit., p.103)

was given.

V. GROUP DYNAMICS STANDS THE TEST

Since it is rather impossible to evaluate generally any large portion of the research in group dynamics to determine how well it measures up with criteria laid down in the section above, a single case example might serve to do this even more effectively.

The report made by Coch and French on an experiment in which a method of group decision was used in overcoming worker resistance to a change of job requirements in a sewing factory will serve as a typical case example. The following account is briefed from the report of the authors.[33]

The Problem: How best to introduce changes in job methods in order to avoid the usual drop in efficiency. Experience in the factory showed a positive and measurable drop in the production of sewing operators whenever they were transferred to a new job or when the present job was altered.

The Method: Three experimental groups and a control group were matched for (1) the difficulty of the job, (2)

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33 Lester Coch and John R.P. French, Jr., "Overcoming Resistance to Change," Human Relations, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1949) pp. 512-532.

the amount of change in the job, (3) the level of productivity before the experiment.

The Control Group: . . . was shifted by the normal factory procedure, i.e., they were called into the conference room and given an explanation of why a change in job methods was necessary, what the new job would be like, and the piece rates for the new job. Questions were asked and full answers given.

Experimental Group #1. Greater degree of democratic participation was used. More detailed and dramatic explanation of the needs for change given. Representatives chosen by the group to participate in the study of the new job and new piece rate. Later they acted as trainers for the remaining members of the group.

Experimental Groups #3 and #4. These groups somewhat smaller in number. All members participated and became involved in the same manner and to the same extent that the representatives did in Experimental Group No. 1. This represented a total participation technique.

The Research Design (outlined above) based on the preliminary theory that "resistance to change is a combination of an individual reaction to frustration with strong group-induced forces, it seemed that the most appropriate methods for over-coming the resistance to change would be group

methods."

<u>Results</u>:

    <u>Control Group</u>: Dropped from 60 units per hour be-
fore the change to 50 units per hour on the first day
after the change. This low level maintained for a
period of 30 days following the change or until the
group was broken up. Marked aggression against manage-
ment; deliberate restriction of production; 17% quits,
and grievances filed about the piece rate.

    <u>Group #1</u>: Production dropped more than in the
control group (to 40 units) for the day of transfer,
but reached standard (60 units) again in a period of
14 days. Continued to improve to well above pro-
duction level at start of experiment. Showed good
relearning curve. Attitude cooperative. No quits.
One act of aggression. The special representative
operators recovered at about the same rate as their
group.

    <u>Groups #2 and #3</u>: Production dropped on first
day after transfer but not as low as other groups.
On second day, they achieved their former level of
production and for the remaining days continued to
show an increase in production, reaching a level
approximately 15% higher than their production before
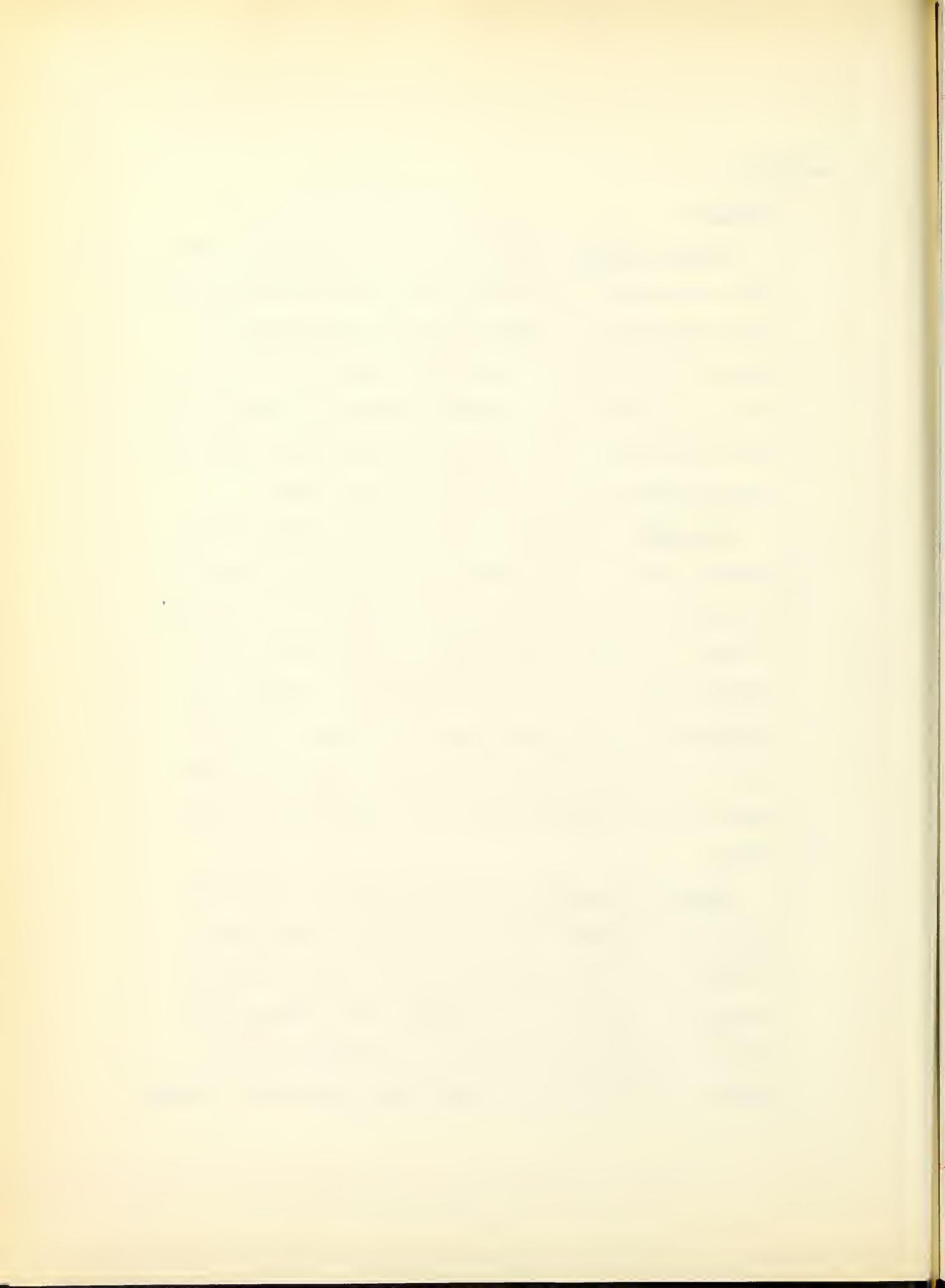
the change. Attitude cooperative. No quits. No

acts of aggression against management.

<u>Conclusion</u>:

Since the amount of aggression expressed against

management and the turn-over rate also varied inversely with

the degree of participation, a logical conclusion seems to

be that the greater participation leads to both greater

productivity and greater satisfaction in the group. The

authors conclude that it is possible for management to

modify greatly or to remove completely group resistances to

changes in methods of work and the ensuing piece rates.

This change can be accomplished by the use of group meetings

in which management effectively communicates the need for

change and stimulates group participation in planning the

change. (See Figures .2 and 3)

<u>Does the above represent the 'scientific method'</u>

<u>applied?</u>

Although the above presentation is a highly condensed

statement of the experiment as reported, it is sufficient

to answer the question raised here. The original report

indicates that the authors were both judicious and systematic

in their observation. Obviously, their data are verifiable.

Neither the classification nor the interpretation presents

a problem because of the nature of the experiment. It

FIGURE 2. THE EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION THROUGH
REPRESENTATION (GROUP 1) AND OF TOTAL
PARTICIPATION (GROUP 2 and 3) ON
RECOVERY AFTER AN EASY TRANSFER. 1
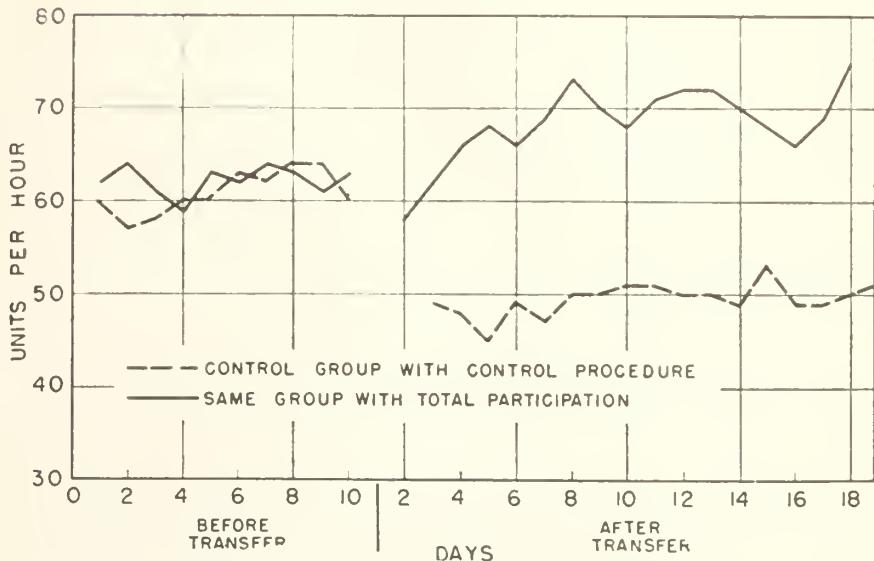
FIGURE 3. A COMPARISON OF THE EFFECT OF THE CONTROL
PROCEDURE WITH THE TOTAL PARTICIPATION
PROCEDURE ON THE SAME GROUP. 2
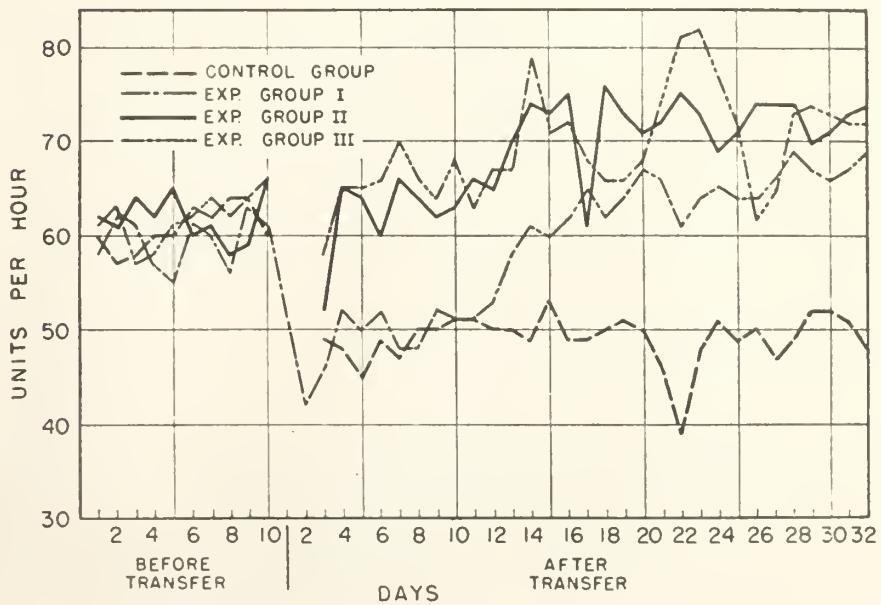
1 Coch and French, op. cit., p. 522.
2 Ibid., p. 523.

seems reasonable to say that the case example meets the requirements of the scientific method.

If we apply the rule set up by Seltig and Cook (Cf. section on The Scientific Method, this chapter), we get the following:

It is socially useful.

a. It deals with a problem that has present social consequences, i.e., labor-management relations.

b. The results can be applied in a concrete situation, i.e., it gives insight on how workers through participation achieve a feeling of self determination.

c. The investigation was carried out in a way which invites application in practical social situations, i.e., a factory situation where job changes ordinarily result in individual worker frustration and reduced job satisfactions.

It is scientifically meaningful.

It resulted in a generalization which is not limited to the immediate setting in the particular investigation. (Although the validation of this generalization requires verification through similar experience in similar situations)
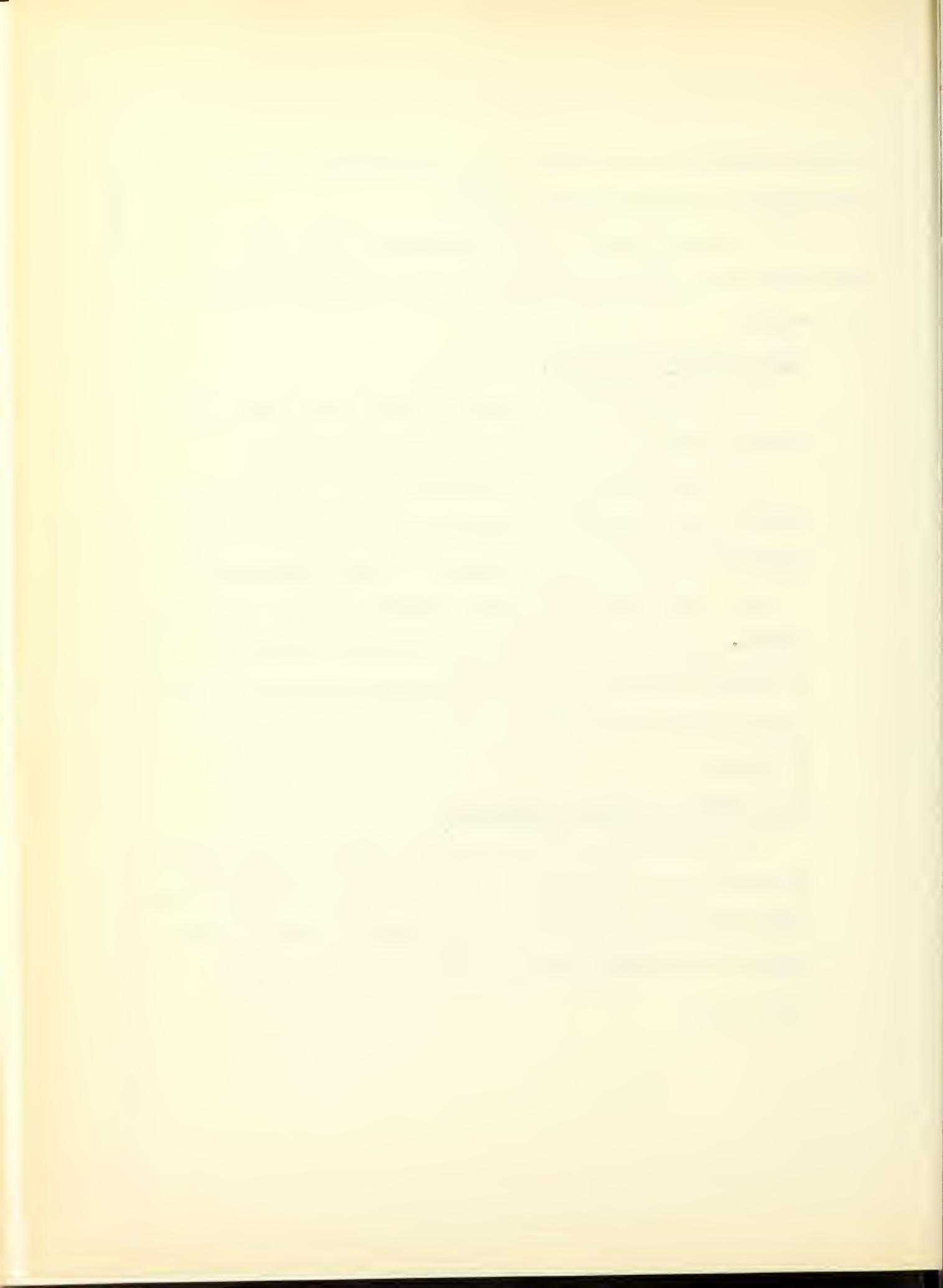
VI. SUMMARY

1. The laboratory experiment is useful but only the field experiment of Group Dynamics can describe the subtleties of group experience.

2. The public relations field must incorporate into its body of knowledge the validated concepts of the social sciences.

3. Lewin's influence was to bring precision into social research and to achieve acceptance for his thesis of the group as an entity capable of scientific examination.

4. Using social research for 'good' becomes the responsibility of the practitioner since science is neutral.

5. Social research can be carried out according to the scientific method.

6. The methods of Group Dynamics research are both socially useful and scientifically meaningful.

CHAPTER III

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF GROUP DYNAMICS RESEARCH
FOR THE PUBLIC RELATIONS FIELD

INTRODUCTION

One of the most remarked on phenomena of our day is the
gap between what-is-known and what-is-done in the area of
social action. One source of the problem is faulty communi-
cations between researcher and practitioner. While com-
plaining that his research findings are absorbed into the
bloodstream of social action at a snail's pace, if at all,
the social scientist continues to report his findings in
language too technical or too unfamilar for the social prac-
titioner to understand, through channels destined not for
the practitioner but for other social scientists. Frequent-
ly, his findings never get the translation necessary so that
the implications for the practitioner are understood. A
dynamic and expanding public relations profession is as
dependent upon social research as the industrialist is upon
physical research. The day is at hand when the practitioner
will recognize this fact. When he does, he will beat a path
to the social research centers with the same eagerness and
respect with which the industrialist goes to the physical
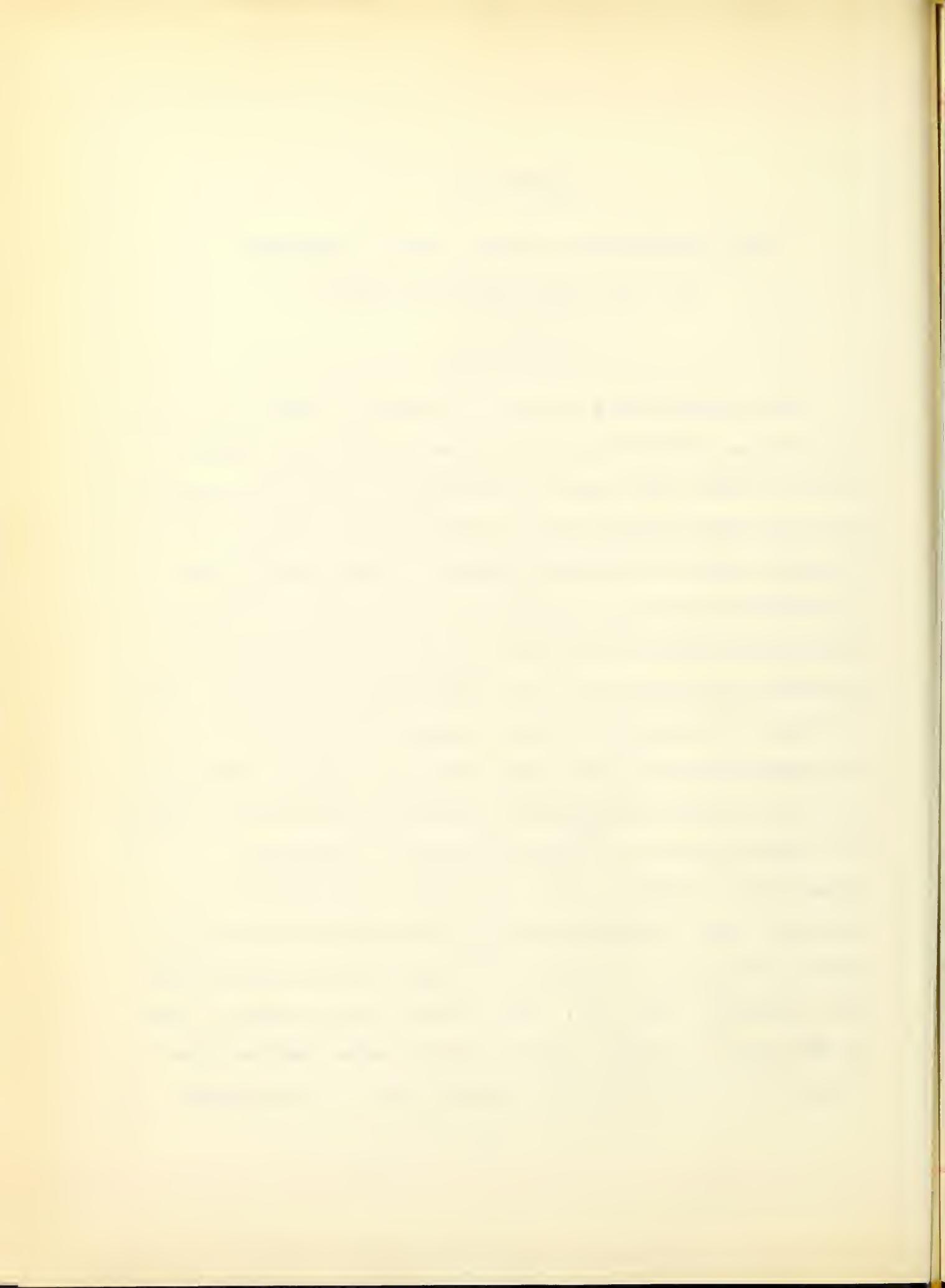
research centers.

This chapter is the heart of this study. It divides itself logically into two parts: the first part reports in non-technical language a number of representative investigations attempting to understand the dynamics of various group-life situations; the second part is an attempt at translating these investigations into the implications they suggest for the public relations field.

I. INVESTIGATION

Leadership Role and Training. Lippitt and White, separately or together, have done most of the research reported on experimentally created 'Social Climates.'[1]

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[1] Cf. (a) R. Lippitt, "An Experimental Study of Authoritarian and Democratic Group Atmospheres," in Studies in Topological and Vector Psychology, I, University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare, No. 16, 1940. (b) R. Lippitt, "An Analysis of Group Reactions to Three Types of Experimentally Created Social Climates," (unpublished doctoral thesis, State University of Iowa, 1940): (c) R. Lippitt, "Field Theory and Experiments in Social Psychology; Authoritarian and Democratic Group Atmospheres," American Journal of Sociology, 1939, Vol. 45, 26-49;(d)R. Lippitt, "The Morale of Youth Groups," in Civilian Morale, ed. by Goodwin Watson (Boston, 1942);(e)K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, and R.K. White, "Patterns for Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created 'Social Climates'," J. Soc. Psych., 1939, Vol. 10, 271-299;(f) R. Lippitt and R.K. White, "The 'Social Climate' of Children's Groups," in Child Development and Behavior, by Barker, Kounin and Wright (New York, 1943).
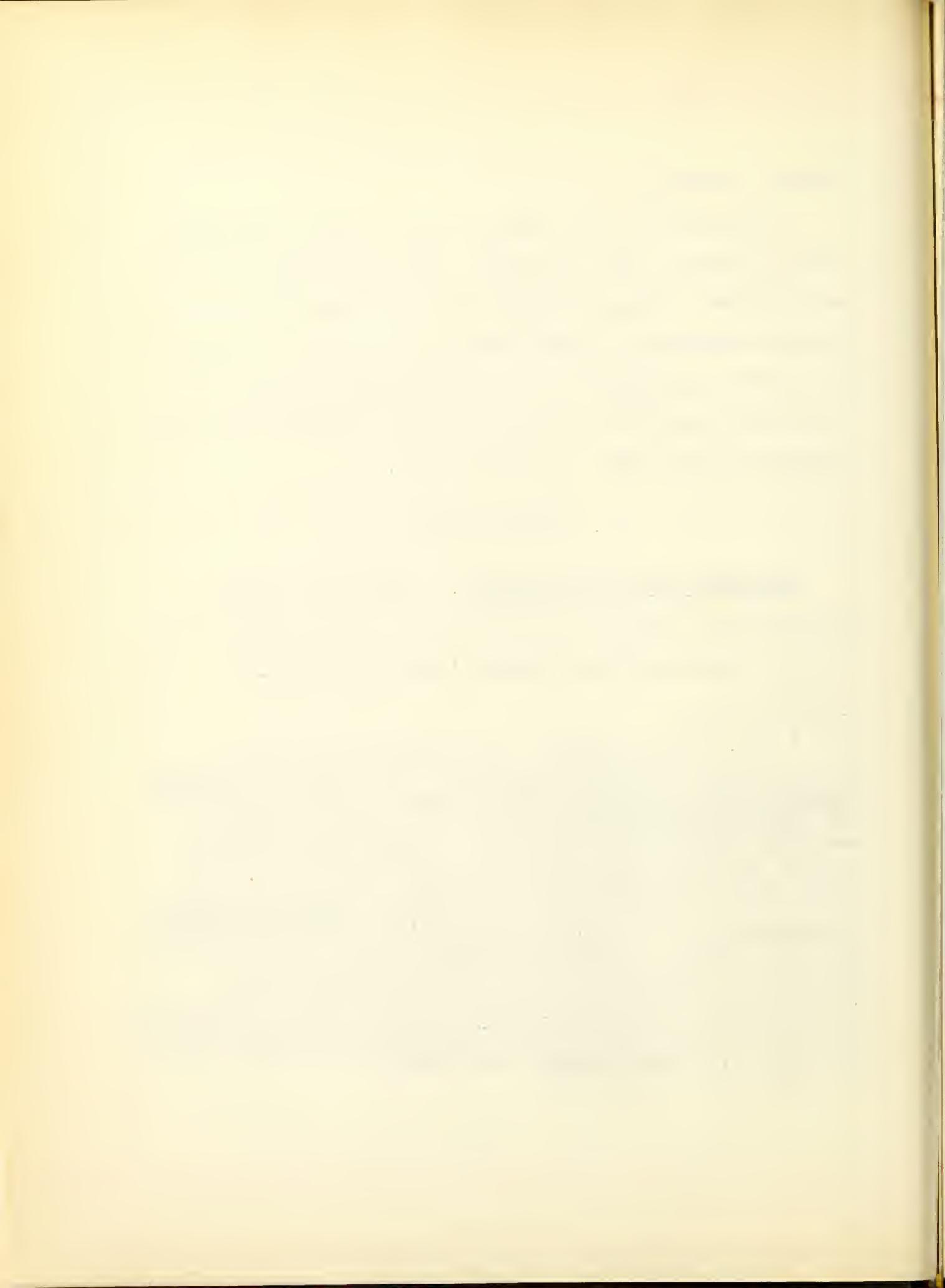
Briefly, what most of these experiments have been interested in discovering is the effect of the leader-type upon the group atmosphere. Using children (10 and 11 year olds) as subjects, the investigators have equated the subjects, placed them into distinct groups and assigned them identical tasks. These tasks, performed in the experimentally created 'social climate', plus the interpersonal relations of the members provided the basis for comparison. The leader-role was the means by which the experimenters created the 'social climate':

Authoritarian. The leader dictates each individual's work behavior, determines all the policies and maintains a rigid though benevolent discipline; the leader does not participate in the group except to demonstrate; the leader's standards of praise and criticism in evaluating individual and group activities are kept to himself.

Democratic. Wherever possible, policies are a matter of group decision, and are discussed with active encouragement and assistance by the leader, who suggested alternatives for making choices. The leader attempts to see that activity perspective emerges during discussion period with the general steps to the goal becoming clarified. The basis for the leader's praise and criticism of individual and group activities are communicated in an objective, fact-minded way. He is a part of the group.

Laissez-faire. Leader plays passive role in social participation and leaves complete freedom for group or individual decision in relation to activity and procedure. The leader gave information but did not participate in group dis-

cussion. He remained aloof and made no attempt
to evaluate behavior or production.[2]

By meticulous stenographic recording of classified
group reactions to the different types of leadership, the
experimenters were able to make comparisons on the basis of
quantitative analysis of these reactions. (See Figures
4 and 5) Other methods used were interviews with each
child, parents and teachers. Each of the leaders headed
each of the three groups for a period of time during the
course of the experiment.

> The democratic set-up was evaluated as best
> because it produced a friendlier rapport between
> members and leaders; there was much less aggressive-
> ness directed toward fellow members; scapegoating
> was rare; there was more toleration for indi-
> vidual differences; and better techniques were
> developed in the way of cooperative planning.[3]

Vaughan[4] points out that these experiments have
special meaning for understanding the interdependence of the
psychological conditioning of people governed and the form

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[2] R. Lippitt and R.K. White, "An Experimental Study
of Leadership and Group Life," Readings in Social Psy-
chology, op. cit., p. 317.

[3] W.F. Vaughan, Social Psychology, (New York: The
Odyssey Press, 1948), p. 894.

[4] Loc cit.

FIGURE 4. COMPARISON OF BEHAVIOR OF AVERAGE AUTHORIT-
ARIAN, DEMOCRATIC, AND LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADER.[1]
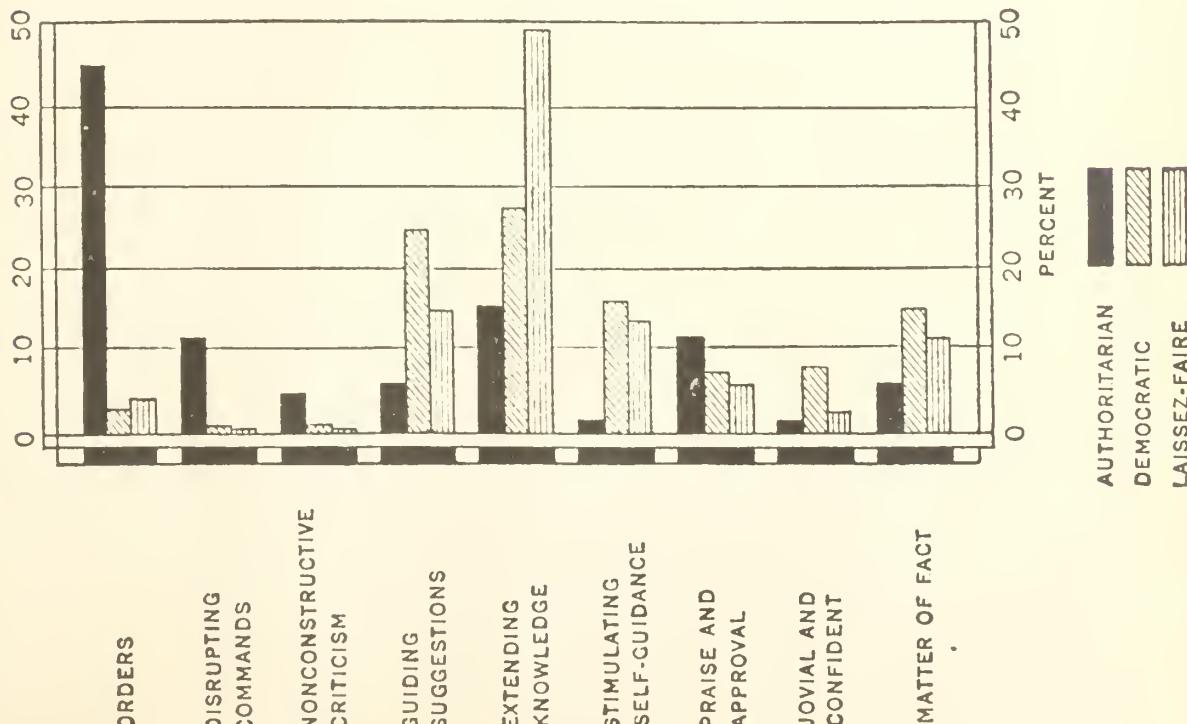
FIGURE 5. FOUR PATTERNS OF GROUP REACTION TO THE THREE
DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEADERSHIP.[2]
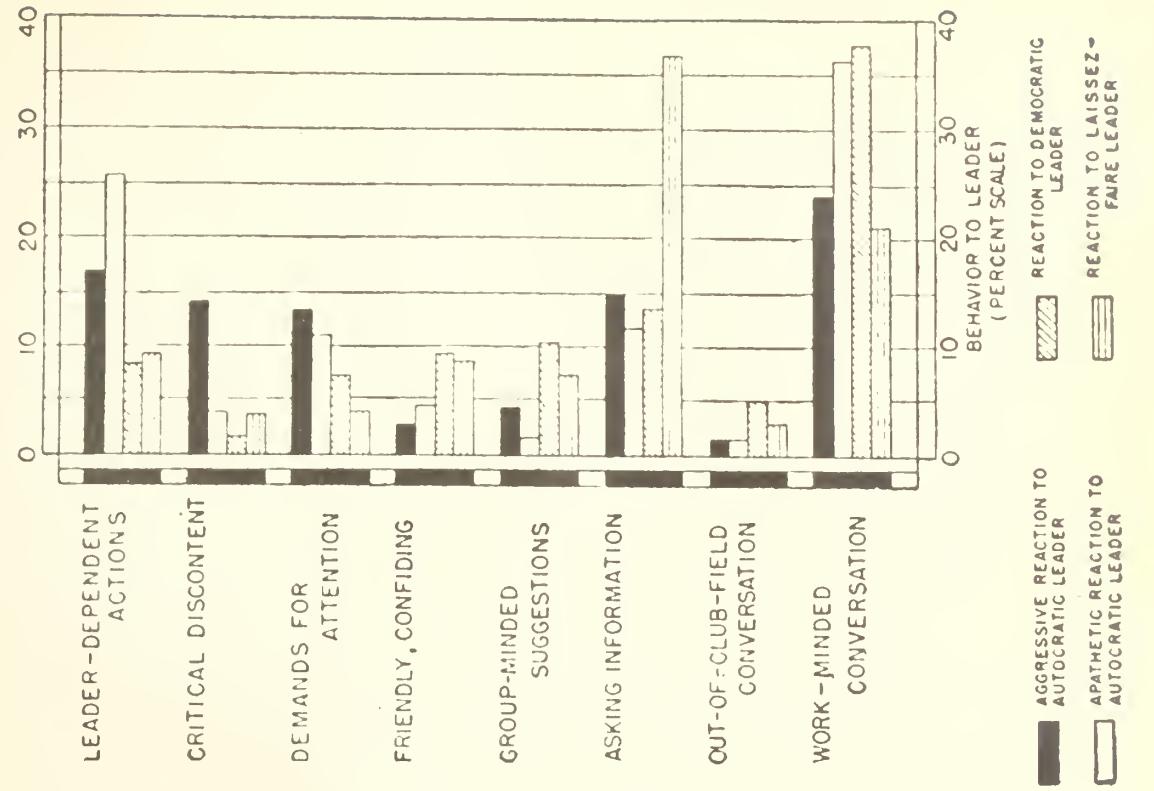
1 Lippitt and White, op.cit., p.318.

2 Ibid., p. 321.

of government best suited to them. Lewin[5] also discusses

some implications of this idea with respect to governing

conquored Germany.

Ferenc Merei's experiments,[6] also with children's groups,

are important for the light they shed on the role of the

leader entering a group with an established tradition. His

observations lead him to suggest that:

> 1. The group absorbs the leader, forcing its
> tradition upon him.

> 2. The group with a tradition is stronger than
> the leader (though he is stronger than any one group
> member).

> 3. The pattern of leadership seems to resolve
> itself into three distinct types: the Order-giver,
> the "bossy" type; the Proprietor, he takes possession
> of all objects; and the Diplomat, accepts the group's
> traditions in order to change them.

Merei, in attempting to define the elusive group "plus,"

says it is "the hold the group's customs and habits have on

the members; it is tradition, the carrier of which is the

individual, who, in turn, is strengthened by it."[7] He con-

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[5] K. Lewin, Resolving Social Conflicts, (New York:
Harper and Brothers, 1948), pp. 30-32.

[6] F. Merei, "Group Leadership and Institutionalization,"
Human Relations, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1949), pp. 23-39.

[7] Ibid., p. 35.
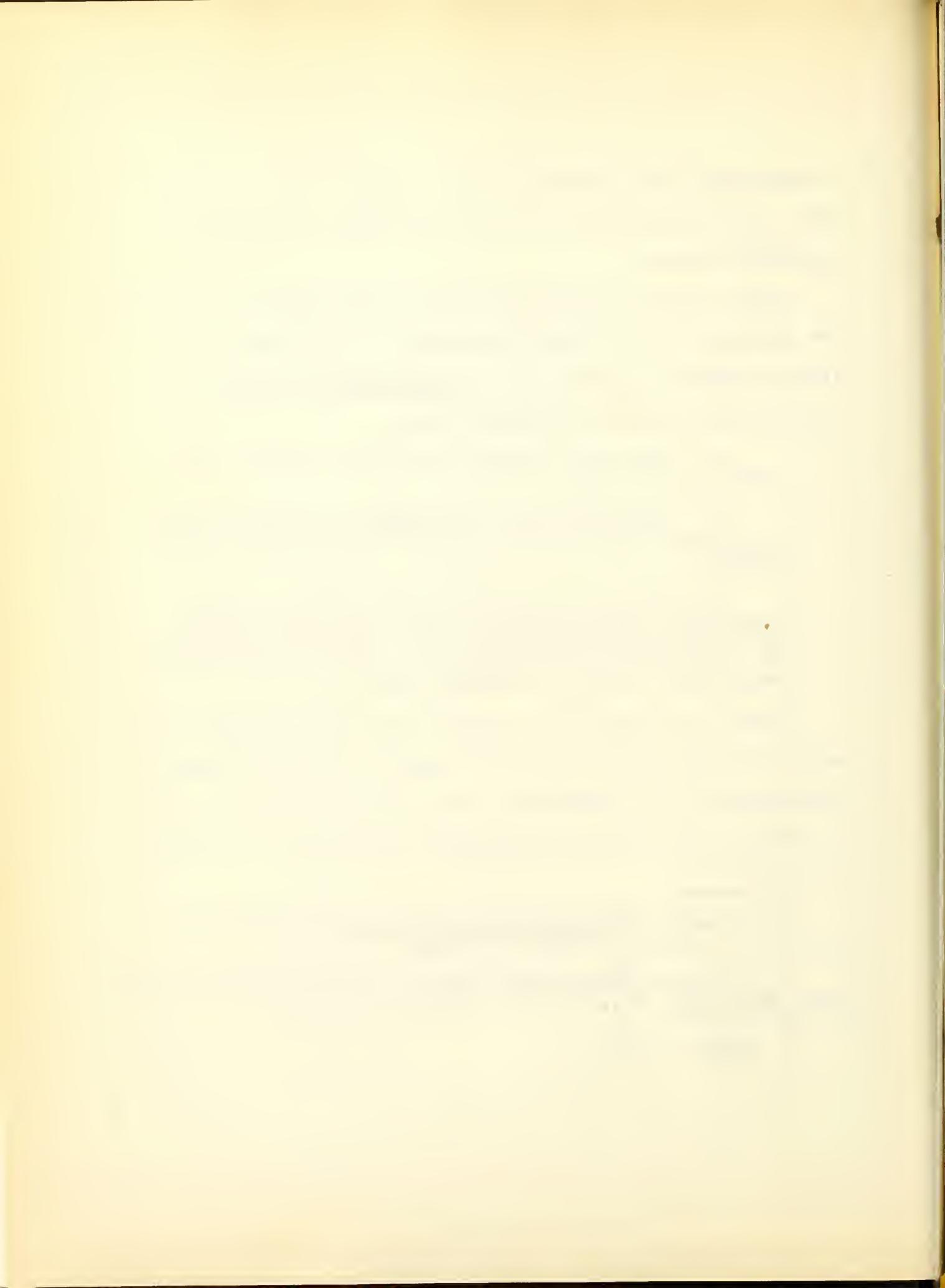
cludes by saying:

> . . . . We can discard all hypotheses which deny
> the uniqueness of the group, and which attempt fully
> to account for the group by assessing its members.
>
> Our experiment refutes the prejudice of meta-
> physical social science that the group, through an
> evening effect, lowers the level of the individual.
> We observed exactly the opposite: the strength of
> the group strengthens its members.[8]

Bavelas and Lewin[9] report an experiment in retraining

mediocre leaders into efficient democratic leaders. Ob-

viously, good leadership is one of the outstanding con-

ditions of any cooperative endeavor or any group-life situ-

ation, e.g., school system, factory or industrial organiza-

tion, Boy Scouts, Conferences, management-labor arbitration,

etc.

The subjects of this retraining experiment were WPA

recreation leaders at a summer "Home Camp" whose children

were free to attend from day to day. The experiment

attempted to test under controlled conditions the efficiency

of certain training methods for a particular field: recrea-

tion.

In essence, the method of retraining was a

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[8] Loc. cit.

[9] A. Bavelas and K. Lewin, "Training in Democratic
Leadership," J. Abnormal Social Psychology, Vol. 37, No. 1,
(January, 1942), pp. 115-119.

combination of changing the attitudes of leaders and changing their techniques. Neither alone would have sufficed. These changes were achieved by a type of "clinic-on-the-job," and by applying democratic methods to the procedure of training.

Changes (from authoritarian to democratic techniques) in working with the children were not accomplished by "talks" about democracy. The actual change took place in the "doing" situation.

The first step was to make the trainees more sensitive to the multitude of ways in which a leader can meet the various social situations. This was done by observing many leaders - good and poor, by observing each other and the trainer, by studying films. The various and unrelated and vague goals became connected and part of more far-reaching goals; the techniques became integrated among themselves and with the underlying attitudes.[10]

There have been several laboratory workshops sponsored jointly by the Research Center for Group Dynamics, the National Education Association and interested private agencies. Their purposes have been to study the leader function in an actual group environment. With the use of widely used clinical techniques, their basic personality

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[10] For further detail on this study, see Bavelas, "Morale and Leadership Training," a chapter in The Second Yearbook of the Society for Psychological Study of Social Issues. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942).

structures have been studied not only to understand the dynamics of various leader-types but also in relation to the productivity of the group. Results of the Wellesley college project have not been made available and the results of the so-called Connecticut project will appear shortly under the title, "Training for Community Relations," by Ronald Lippitt.[11] Although no intensive report has been prepared to summarize the findings of the National Training Laboratory, a continuing project each summer at Bethel, Maine, since 1947, there have been scattered reports on various aspects of the laboratory workshop as a technique as well as on the research design which in itself is unique. This discussion on the National Training Laboratory might just as well have come under the next section of this chapter since it is as much concerned with group productivity and communication process as it is with leader-training. Cartwright[12] has caught the broad purpose of the laboratory and its many facets of fact finding activity:

Thoughtful education and action leaders every-

[11] Correspondence from Dorwin Cartwright, Director, Research Center for Group Dynamics, University of Michigan, June 6, 1949.

[12] Report of the Second Summer Laboratory Session, Bulletin #3, NEA and RCGD, U. of Michigan, 1948, in "Forward."

where have become increasingly aware that current
methods of conference procedure, committee op-
eration, education and training process and staff
working relations can be vastly improved to achieve
maximum human productivity. . . . Some evidence
suggests that the intensive practice laboratory
in human relations skills, isolated from the
pressures of daily work and living, may prove to
be the most effective means of learning how to
bring behavior into line with the difficult demands
of democratic ideology.

This Laboratory was initiated (1) to provide research
scientists with an opportunity to communicate sci-
entific knowledge of group dynamics to key edu-
cation and action leaders, (2) to provide an op-
portunity for observing, experiencing, and prac-
ticing basic elements of the democratic group
process which are relevant to educational and
action leadership, and (3) to provide an experi-
mental laboratory for further research explorations
of basic problems of assessment and improvement
of group growth, group thinking, and group action.[13]

The value of such a laboratory for leadership training

lies in the opportunity to have a practical experience under

expert guidance in a situation that differs from the real

life leadership situation in that it is not "for keeps."

Mistakes can be observed and new approaches tried. At the

same time, such experience heightens the social perception

insofar as such group experience involves synthesizing varied

facets of knowledge into workable social concepts.

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[13] Loc. cit.

Admittedly it is too early to assess the research learnings or training effects of this research effort, nevertheless, there is a conclusion that can be drawn that has high significance for the public relations field. It is that

> . . . in all those areas of living where interpersonal and group relations are of paramount importance there are basic skills for stimulating changes in attitudes, behavior, and performance which can be identified, acquired, practiced, and communicated to the end that conflict in group life and inter-group life in modern society can be reduced constructively and co-operative learning and action efforts for the common good increased.[14]

Group Productivity. The research design and the training program of the laboratory reflect an awareness of the complexity of successful training in human relations. There is not only the need of changing the individual toward increased skill in the person-to-person situations; there is also the need of doing this for the group as an "organism." This is by way of saying that it is possible to direct the entire group toward greater group maturity, strength and productivity.

A number of investigations relative to the nature of

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[14] Faculty of the Training Laboratory in Group Development, "A Laboratory in Educational Dynamics," reprint from School and Society, Vol. 66, No. 1721 (December 20, 1947), p. 14.

group productivity have revealed much that is of immediate use to the practitioner. The following examples serve to illustrate the nature of these investigations:

a. Problem solving. Shaw in 1932 reported a study she did in which problems were given to single individuals and to small groups of cooperating individuals so that comparisons of group ability as against individual ability might be made. The problems were of a type which necessitated interchange of ideas and group participation. It was impossible for them to be solved by any one individual getting a sudden inspiration. Precautions were taken for properly equating the individuals into groups of four members each. Shaw reports the following conclusions:

1. Groups seem assured of a much larger proportion of correct solutions than individuals.

2. This seems to be due to the rejection of incorrect suggestions and the checking of errors in the group.

3. In groups of the size here used, more incorrect suggestions are rejected by another member of the group than by the individual who proposed the suggestion.

4. All members do not cooperate or participate equally in the solution of the problem.

5. In erroneous solutions (where it is possible to determine the exact point at which the first error was made), groups do not err so

soon as the average individual does.[15]

b. _Work groups._ Opportunities for field experiments using work groups are perhaps more numerous than others because of the implications discovery in this area has for industry. This is not to say that opportunities are sufficient by any means.

French suggests that, "Perhaps the best known experimental studies of productivity in social psychology are the classical alone and together experiments.[16]

> The experimental technique was the simple procedure of measuring the output of the individual alone, without the presence of others, and then comparing it with his output on the same task in a group situation . . . In general these studies demonstrated that an individual is more productive in a group setting than he is in isolation.[17]

The "together" situations represented parallel individual behavior, however, and not interdependent behavior in the current research sense of "group productivity." These experiments are important in social psychology as the springboard for the present investigations in group dynamics.

Perhaps the most widely known investigations into the

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[15] Marjorie E. Shaw, "A Comparison of Individuals and Small Groups in the Rational Solution of Complex Problems," _American Journal of Psychology_, Vol. 44, (1932), p. 504.

[16] John R.P. French, Jr., "Field Experiments: Changing Group Productivity," Research Center for Group Dynamics, MIT, (mimeographed), p. 1.

[17] _Loc. cit._
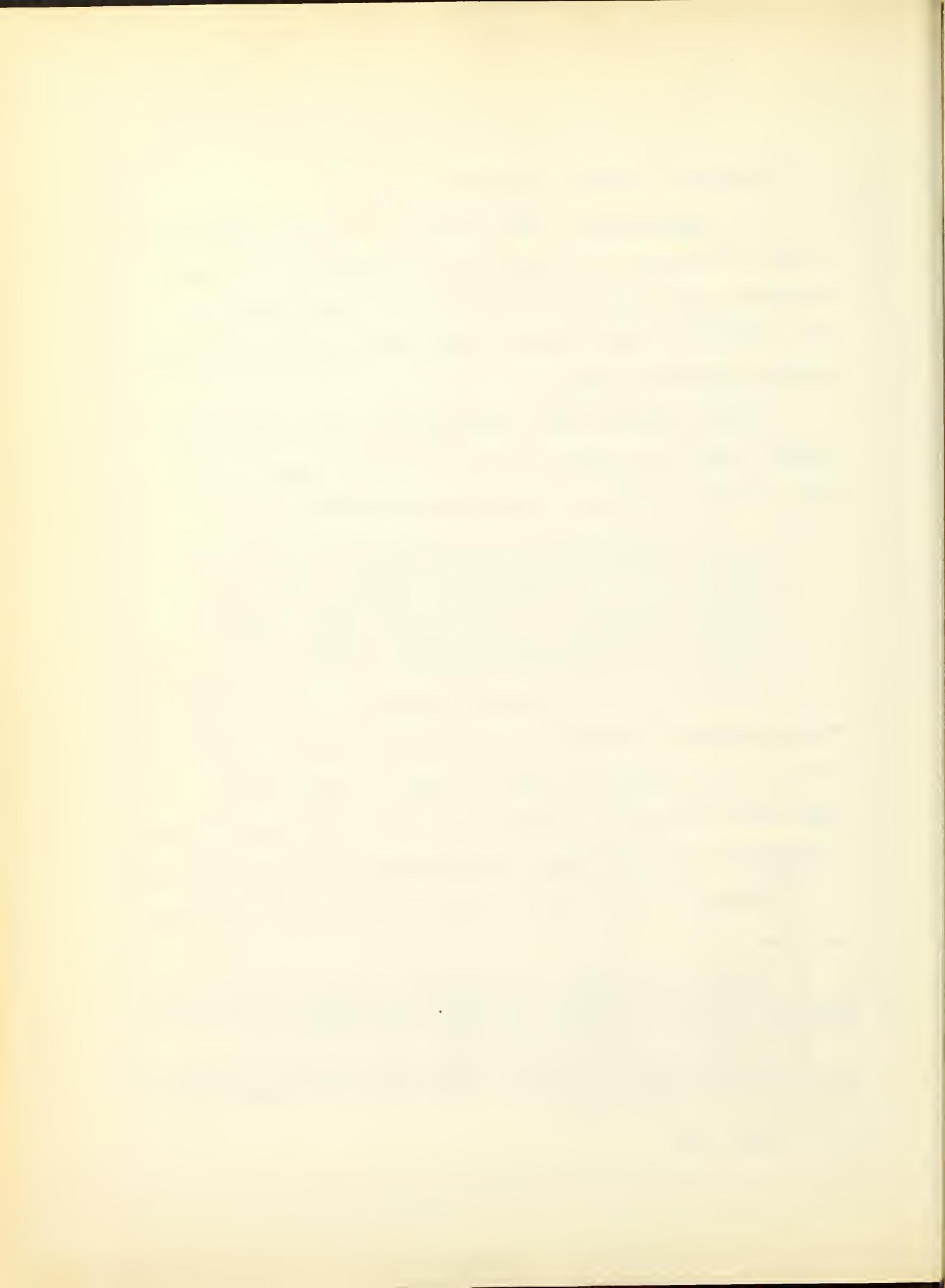
nature of group productivity are those conducted jointly by the Western Electric Company and the Harvard Business School at the Hawthorne, N.J., plant. These experiments studied a group in a factory where the nature of the work caused the members to be highly interdependent in their behavior. The original purpose of the experiment was to determine the relationship between physical conditions of work and the productivity of the group. Many months of careful measurement showed no significant relationship between output and such physical factors as temperature and illumination. The experiments did demonstrate in a dramatic way, the importance of social factors in group productivity. The increased productivity of the work group studied were more influenced by social factors (social status, participation in job decisions, satisfactions connected with group affiliations) than by factors in the physical environment.[18]

Both French and Bavelas have carried on a number of experiments on group productivity at the Harwood Manufacturing Corporation in Marion, Virginia. This is a sewing factory under a very enlightened management. The experiments were aimed at discovering whether democratic techniques would be

18 Ibid., p. 2.

effective in increasing productivity in an industrial setting

and to study analytically the democratic methods such as

group decision, etc.

These experiments seem to justify three conclusions:

(1) the implication of skillful democratic
techniques of leadership in industrial settings can
result in extremely marked increases in group pro-
ductivity which will persist over long periods of
time.

(2) The procedure used, such as the difference
between group decision and pacing cards, do make
a difference, but this difference is not inde-
pendent of the style of leadership.

(3) In such experimental settings, the style
of personal leadership of face-to-face groups is
probably the most important variable, and it
differs markedly from one experimenter to another.[19]

The Survey Research Center at the University of

Michigan published a preliminary, non-technical report of

selected findings from a study conducted in the home office

of the Prudential Insurance Company. The purpose of the

study was to find out some of the psychological factors

related to group productivity. Productivity was measured

by computing the personnel costs for accomplishing a given

amount of work. The subjects in the study were 742 non-

supervisory personnel and 73 supervisors, and managerial

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[19] Loc. cit.

personnel in selected sections and divisions in two

departments of the company. The method used here consisted

primarily of intensive interviews with these employes which

were conducted over the period September 8 to November 4,

1947.

This study is not so much concerned with the findings

as they concern the specific jobs at Prudential as it is

with the general psychological interpretation these findings

suggest:

> People are more effectively motivated when they
> are given some degree of freedom in the way in which
> they do their work than when every action is pre-
> scribed in advance. They do better when some degree
> of decision-making about their jobs is possible
> than when all decisions are made for them. They
> respond more adequately when they are treated as
> personalities than as cogs in a machine, In short,
> if the ego motivations of self-determination, of
> self-expression, of a sense of personal worth can
> be tapped, the individual can be more effectively
> energized. The use of external sanctions, of
> pressuring for production may work to some degree,
> but not to the extent that the more internalized
> motives do. When the individual comes to identify
> himself with his job and with the work of his
> group, human resources are much more fully utilized
> in the production process.[20]

Here are a number of findings based on comparative

measurement which the report considered statistically sig-

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[20] Survey Research Center, Univ. of Mich., "Productivity,
Supervision and Employee Morale," "Human Relations, Series
1, Report 1, p. 4. (Not to be confused with Human Relations,
a quarterly journal).

nificant:

(1) Low-production section heads are more closely super-
vised than are high production heads.

(2) Pressure for production does not characterize the
high production sections.

(3) "Employee centered" supervisors are higher pro-
ducers than "production centered" supervisors.

(4) High production supervisors encourage group par-
ticipation and discussion.

(5) Supervisors of high-production sections are more
satisfied with the set-up of their jobs than super-
visors of low production sections.

(6) Supervisors in high and low divisions differ in
confidence and personal security.

(7) Pride in work-group is related to productivity.

(8) Managers and assistant managers are more popular
with employes in high production divisions.

c. Communication. Research only recently has under-

taken the highly complex problem of trying to understand

the role of communication in the disintegration and inte-

gration of groups. Although some progress is being made in

the development of methods for more effective communication,

this area remains one of the most difficult for the social

scientists. From the standpoint of the public relations

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[21](a)Ibid., p. 2ff. (b) Cf. L.P. Bradford and R.
Lippitt, "Building a Democratic Work Group," Personnel
(AMA publication), 1945, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 1-12. Also
"Role Playing in Supervisory Training," Personnel, 1945),
Vol. 22, No. 6, pp. 3-14.
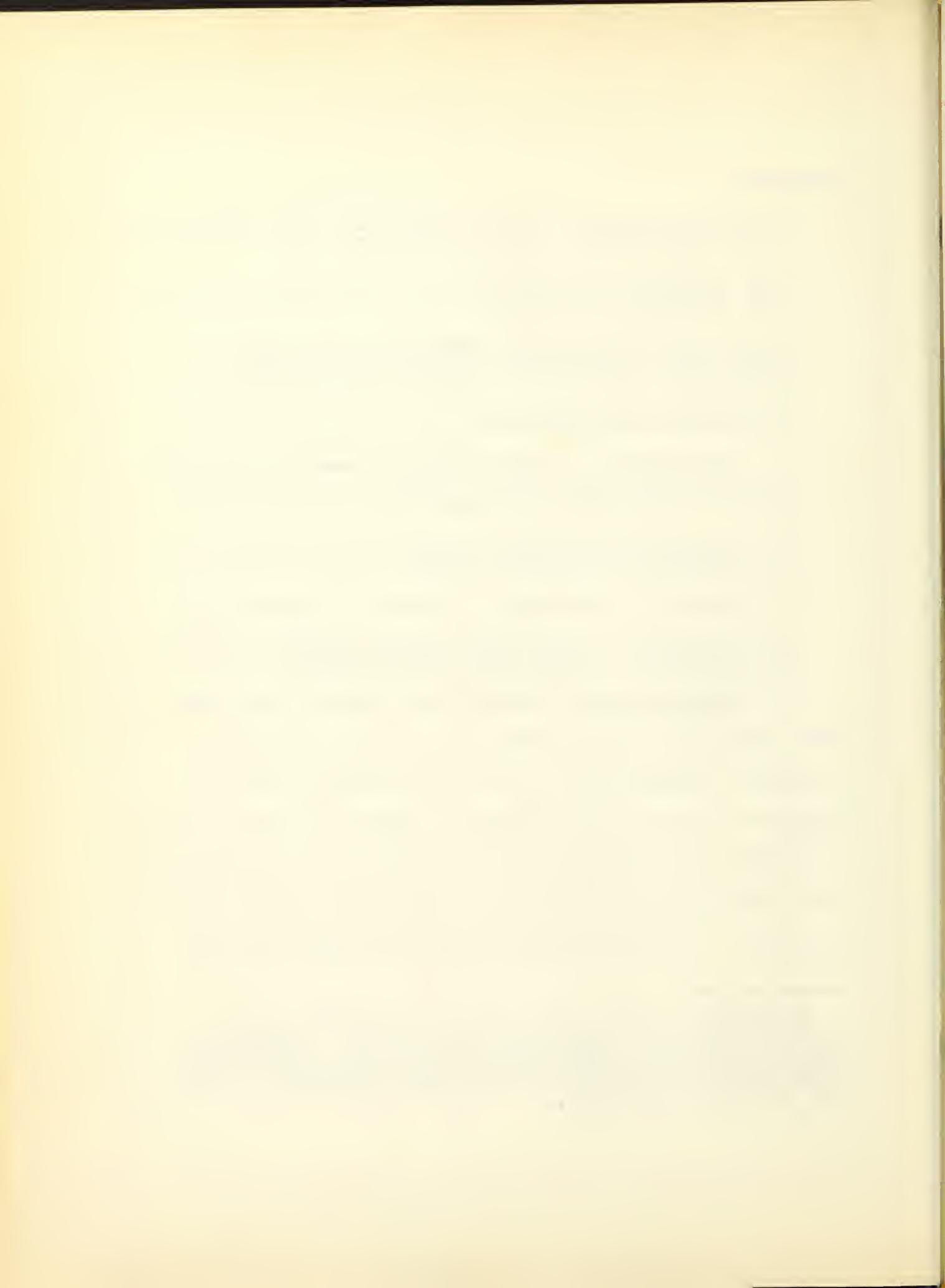
field, it is probably one of the most significant areas of investigation. There is the knotty problem of effecting communication between persons and groups with different value systems, e.g., management and the research scientist, management and the worker.[22] Other psychological barriers to be overcome are those presented by poor morale, fatigue, monotony, prejudice, etc. To establish communication across lines of private interest, special interest, and social distance, there must be established some common ground or frame of reference from which special experiences and skills may be seen and appreciated.

Under the direction of Alex Bavelas of the Industrial Relations Section of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a group of graduate students has been carrying on some preliminary experimental work on the mathematical characteristics of and differences between various communication patterns in group solving of problems. This work, first begun in 1946, is resulting in several Doctoral theses which, at the time of this investigation, are in various states of

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[22] Cf. as a good cast study of the development of management-union communication, "From Conflict to Cooperation," _Applied Antho._, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Fall, 1946) 31 pp. The study was done by the University of Chicago's Committee on Human Relations in Industry.

completion.

The design of these experiments in group communication took into consideration seven possible major variables: (1) size of the group, (2) Means of communication, (3) type of task problem, (4) type of subject, (5) personality of experimenter, (6) specific motivation, and (7) communication pattern.

The first six of the variables were held effectively constant so that what differences in data did appear should be ascribable to the differences in pattern.

The experimental work has been restricted to groups containing five men. Bavelas' group was able to show a total of twenty-one topologically different communication patterns using the five man group. From these were chosen four basic patterns into which the twenty-one seemed naturally to arrange themselves. They "looked" different and, hence, it was thought that they might produce different results in terms of efficiency in problem solving and other aspects of group behavior.

The four basic communications patterns are pictured below. In all of them except the circle, "central" and "peripheral" men can be classified:

A
E   B
D   C

C
B   D
A   E

A   B
C
D
E

A   B
C
D   E
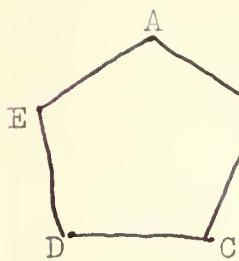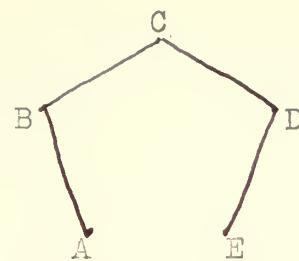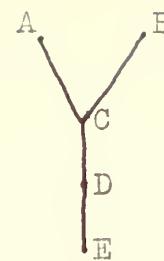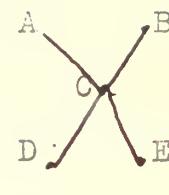
Circle   Chain   "Y"   Wheel

Is there any relationship between the pattern of a communication, e.g., the route it travels, and it's effectiveness? What is the relationship of the communication pattern to the emergence of a "leader" in the group? Will different communication patterns, given the same group, operate to decide different "leaders?" These and many other important questions of communication may well be answered by such investigations.[23]

Moreno,[24] it should be pointed out, has done a great deal of work with both simple and complex patterns of communication. His work has resulted more from observations made about the quality of the interpersonal communication

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[23] The discussion here is indebted to memeographed materials prepared and distributed by members of Bavelas' graduate seminar of which I was a member during the Spring semester, 1949, at M.I.T.

[24] Moreno, op. cit., p. 114 ff.

than it has from efforts to compare by experimentation the differences that might arise from the use of various communication patterns.

Personal contact plays an important role in opinion formation. Studies seem to confirm the idea that the greater the amount of "personalism" the communication act contains, the more effective it presumably is.[25]

1. Typical of action research on communication processes was that undertaken by the Research Center for Group Dynamics under a contract with the Office of Naval Research. A problem in establishing communication between two groups was poised by the building of a government postwar housing project. The attractive, white building to house 100 families is situated in the middle of a long established community of low-income families. The new people who moved in did not expect to like their poorer neighbors. The latter felt that they were being high-hatted - as in fact they were. On the basis of interviews with both groups, the following conclusions were reached: the project people moved in feeling that the community people were beneath

[25] Bernard Berelson, "Communication and Public Opinion," in Communication in Modern Society, edited by Wilbur Schramm (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1948), p. 172.

them; such attitudes operated against communication and therefore against any change in these original attitudes; those in the project felt they were living among un-desirables, and this attitude led to the perception that they themselves were looked down on by outsiders; all this led to voluntary isolation which is a pattern of non-communication. To meet the challenge of the problem, the social scientists brought about a change in the communication pattern by effecting a change in the pattern of social living. Activities were stimulated to get the people to work and play together. A nursery school was set up, teen-age dances organized, a neighborhood newspaper started, adult men's softball teams organized, etc. Thus the social scientists actually opened channels of communication through which attitude changes took place. [26]

Another experiment along these same lines is that under the direction of Festinger on the social and psychological aspects of housing. In this study two housing projects were the laboratory. The satisfactions and dissatisfactions of families with their homes were studied in two different

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[26] Research in Progress - a summary of current activities of the Research Center of Group Dynamics, MIT, May 16, 1947, p. 8 (mimeo).

neighborhoods. The study seemed to indicate among other

things that the pattern and frequency of communication

among neighbors have implications for successful living.

Several major conclusions concerning the functioning of small

face-to-vace groups are made:

> The more cohesive the group, that is, the more
> friendship ties there are within the group, and the
> more active the process of communication which goes
> on within the group, the greater will be the effect
> of the process of communication in producing uniform-
> ity of attitudes, opinions and behavior, and the
> stronger will be the resulting group standard, as
> indicated by the degree of uniformity among members
> of the group and the amount of deviation from the
> group standard allowed in members.

> If the homogeneity of attitudes, opinions and
> behavior results directly from the ongoing process
> of communication there should be a relationship be-
> tween conformity to the group standard and the amount
> of communication that exists between any individual and
> other members of the group. We would expect greater
> deviation among those people who have less communi-
> cation with the group.[27]

Effecting Behavior Changes. It was pointed out earlier

in this study that most public relations activity is directed

toward effecting behavior changes in publics. It becomes

evident then that the results of experiments directed toward

understanding the dynamics of change may well provide in-

sights highly useful to the public relations practitioner.

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[27] K. Back, L. Festinger, S. Schachter, Social Influence
(in press), chapter 10.
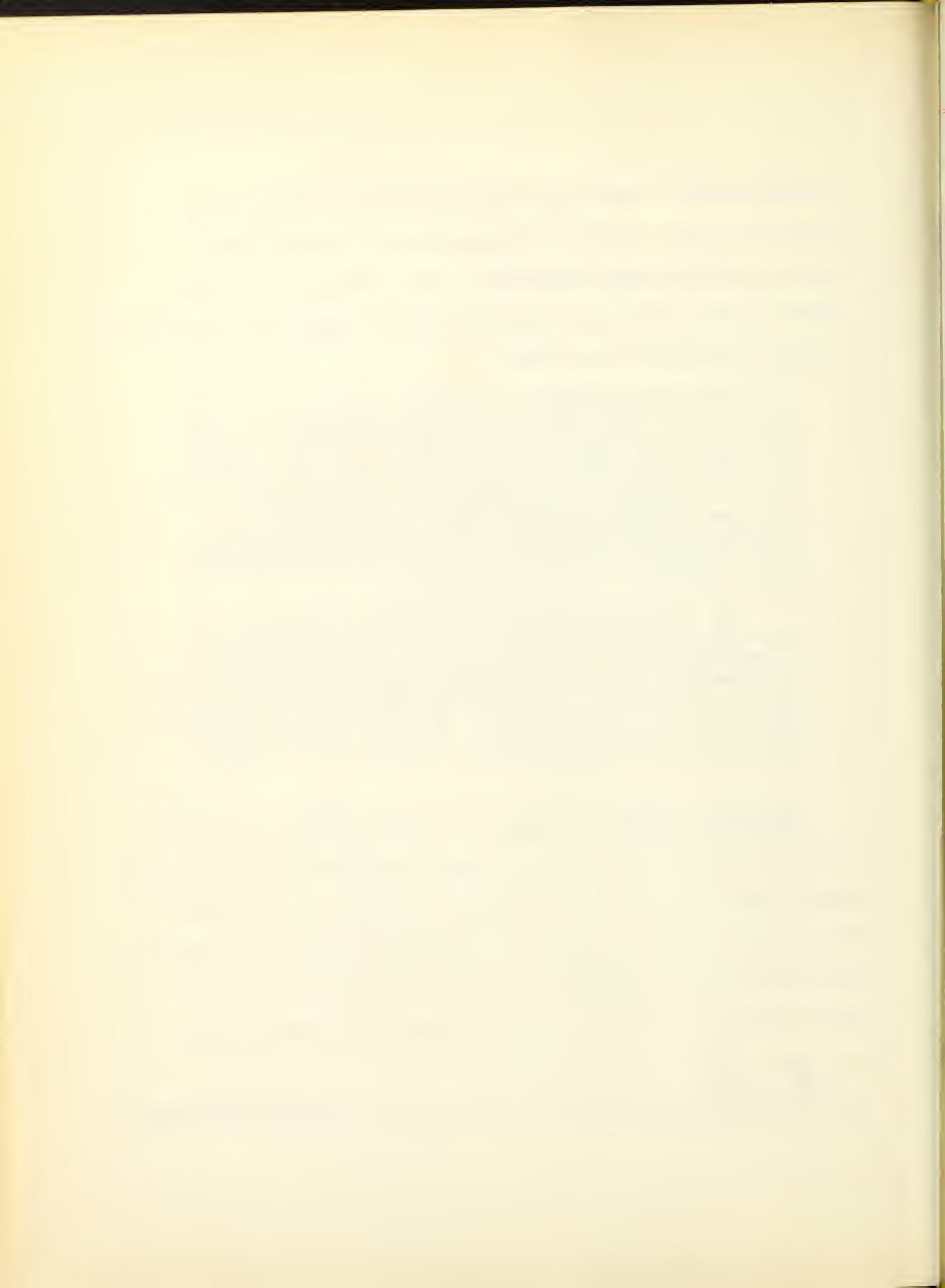
The case studies in this section are given under three sub-headings: Group Decision, Role Playing and Intergroup Relations. Perhaps one of the most significant change concepts is that individuals are easier to change in the group situation than they are individually. Lewin puts it this way:

> One might expect single individuals to be more pliable than groups of like minded individuals. However, experience in leadership training, in changing food habits, work production, criminality, alcoholism, prejudices, all indicate that it is easier to change individuals formed into a group than to change any one of them separately. As long as the group standards are unchanged, the individual will resist changes more strongly the further he is to depart from group standards. If the group standard itself is changed, the resistance which is due to the relationship between individual and group standard is eliminated.[28]

a. _Group Decision_.   1. A study by Radke and Klisurch[29] compares three methods of modifying behavior as re-

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[28] K. Lewin, "Group Decision and Social Change," _Readings in Social Psychology_, edited by Newcomb, Hartley and others (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1947), p. 343.

[29] M. Radke and D. Klisurch, "Experiments in Changing Food Habits," _Journal American Dietetic Association_, Vol. 23, No. 5, (May, 1947), pp. 403-409.

lated to food: group decision,[30] lecture and individual

instruction. Of the two experiments made, (1) dealt with

infant feeding by mothers of new-born infants and compared

individual instruction and group decision methods, (2) dealt

with changes in the amount of milk used by housewives and

compared the lecture and group decision techniques.

The authors report that:

> (1) The group decision method was significantly more effective in leading mothers and housewives to action than were either individual instruction or lectures.

> (2) These reports are consistent with the findings of Lewin and Willerman.[31]

Figures 6 and 7 tell more dramatically than words

how effective group decision was with the mothers' groups.

2. The authors' reference to Lewin above concerns his

experiment in changing food habits. He used six Red Cross

groups of volunteers organized for home nursing. There were

from 13 to 17 in each group. The experiment tested the

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[30] In differentiating between group decision and group discussion, Lewin has pointed out that in both there is free exchange of ideas and a certain amount of initiative taken by the group; but group decision leads to the setting up of definite goals for action; and these goals tend to be stabilized by group decision in a way which carries the individual through to action.

[31] Radke and Klisurch, op. cit., p. 409.
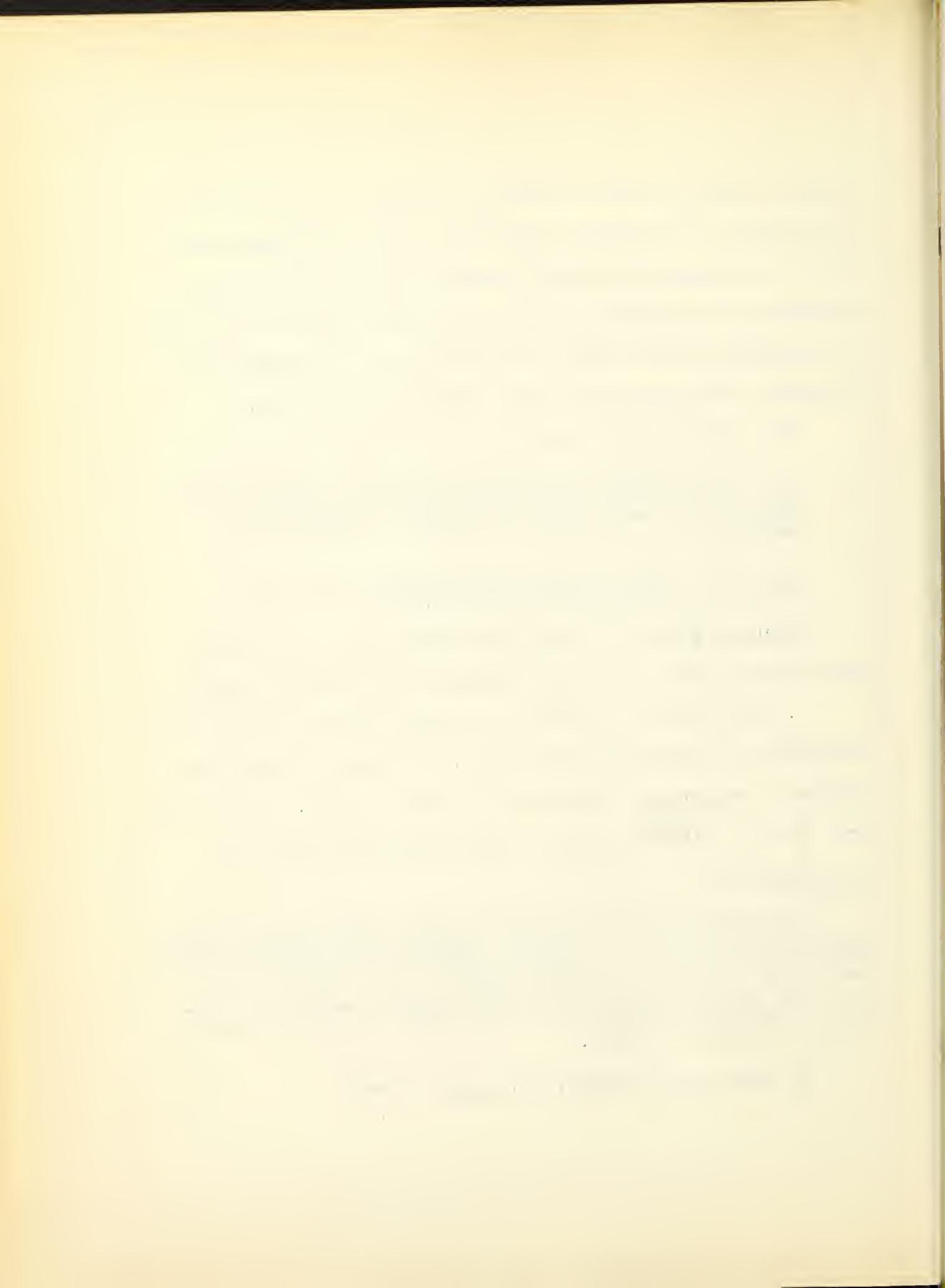
FIGURE 6. PERCENTAGE OF MOTHERS FOLLOWING INSTRUCTION
AFTER GROUP DECISION AND INDIVIDUAL
INSTRUCTION.
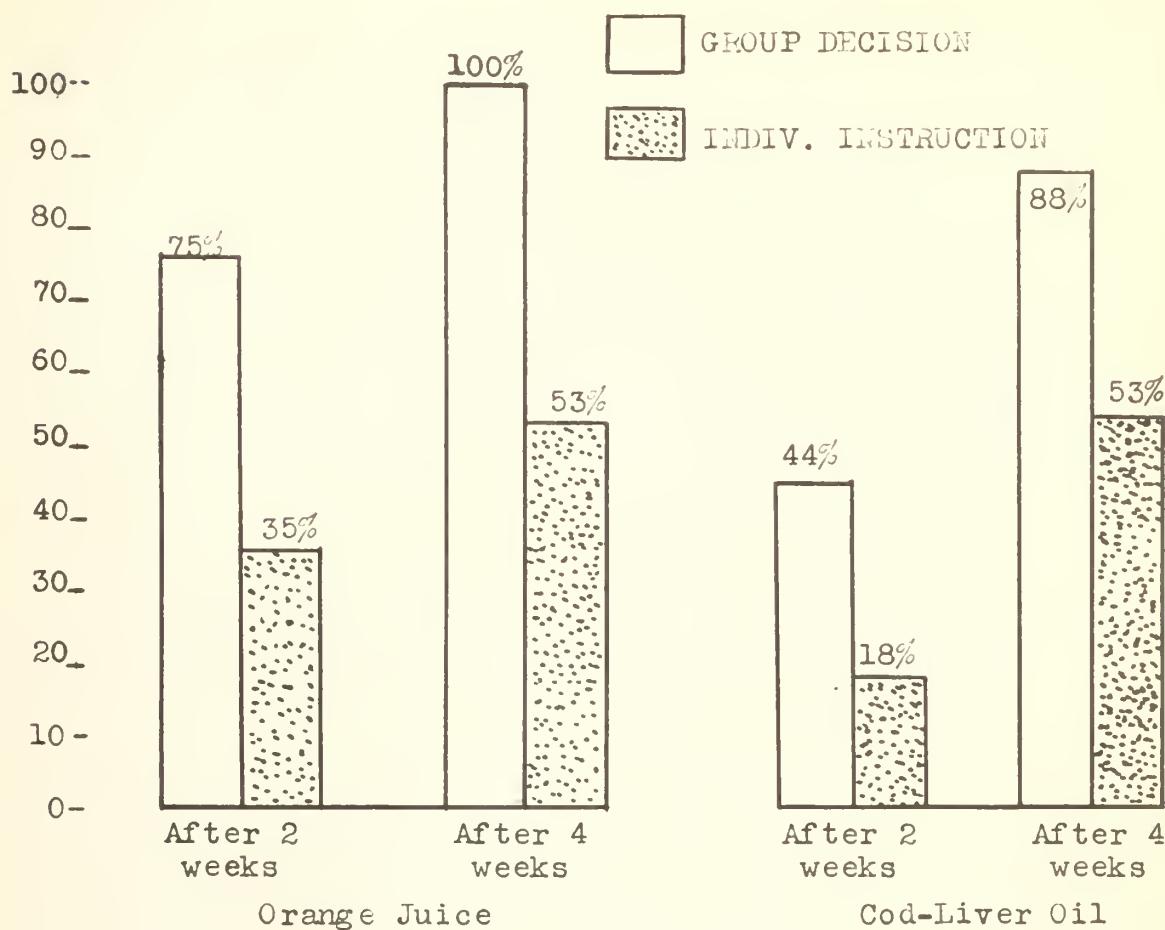
FIGURE 7. PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEWIVES REPORTING AN
INCREASE IN THE CONSUMPTION OF MILK.
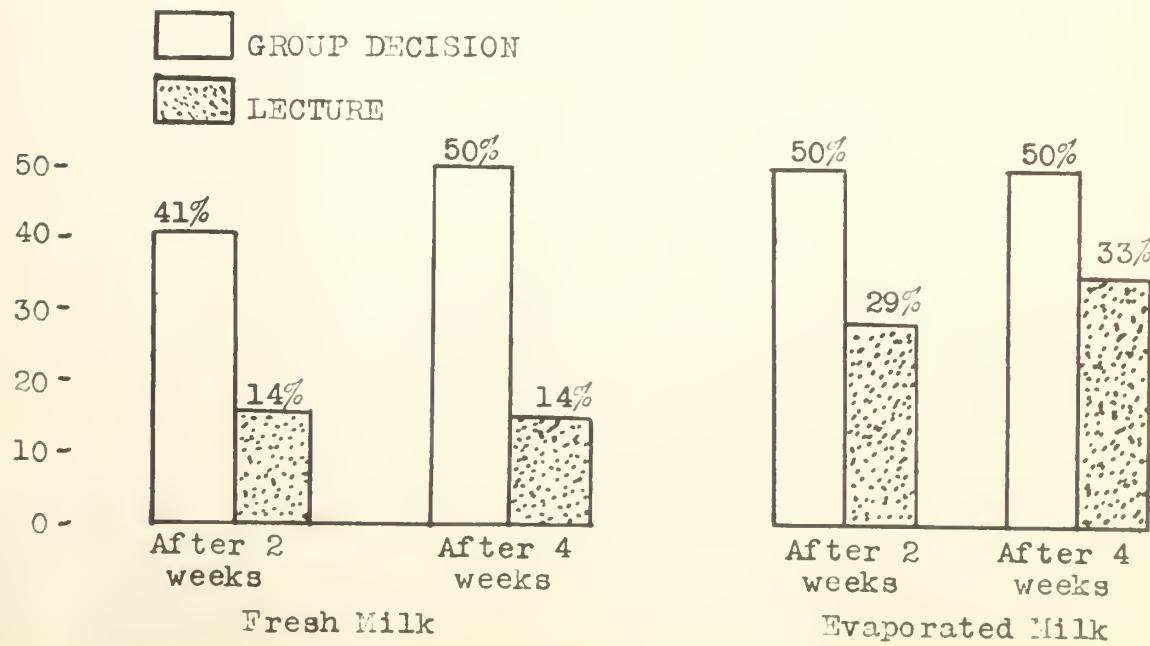
lecture as against the group decision method in increasing
the use of beef hearts, sweetbreads, and kidneys. Three
groups were given attractive lectures which linked the
problem of nutrition with the war effort, emphasizing vita-
min and mineral value, etc. The other three groups were
told of the importance of nutrition in the general problem
of health in the war effort. A discussion was started.
Lewin reports:

> A follow-up showed that only 3 per cent of the
> women who heard the lecture served one of the meats
> never served before, whereas after group decision
> 32 per cent served one of them.[32]

3. Maier reports an industrial situation in which Alex
Bavelas by a method of group decision increased the pro-
duction of a group of workers despite the fact that their
production was already above the standard set for their jobs
by a time and motion analysis. In order to determine whether
the increase was due to factors other than group decision,
Bavelas used two other working teams (control groups) doing
the same job. They received the same friendly treatment
and encouragement, but no production goal was decided upon.
Figure 8 shows the marked and sustained increase caused

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[32] Lewin, "Group Decision and Social Change," op. cit.,
p. 335.

FIGURE 8. EFFECT OF GROUP DECISION ON SEWING-MACHINE
OPERATORS. [1]
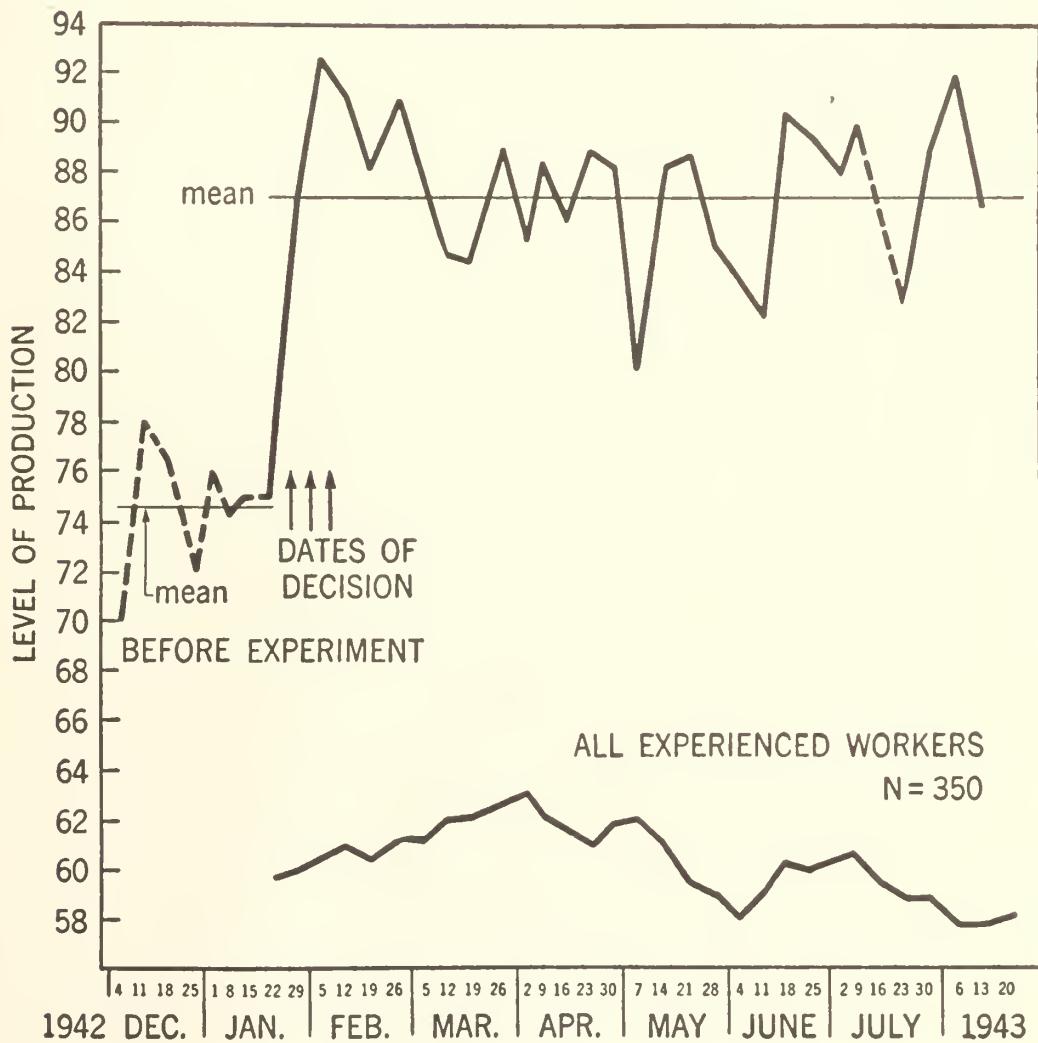
1 Lewin, "Group Decision and Social Change,"
op.cit., p. 343.

by group decision. The control groups showed no such influence.[33]

4. It was in connection with his experiments on changing food habits that Lewin conceived of the "concept of the gatekeeper." Given the problem of producing widespread social changes in food habits, certain questions of procedure arise. Should the total population who are to be changed be approached via whatever media decided upon, or would it be more advisable to concentrate on some strategic part of that population? Do all members have equal importance in determining what is eaten? If not who should get special attention? Insofar as the housewife is in a "key position" to determine what goes on the family table then if we consider the entire "social channel" that food must pass through from producer to consumer, it is readily seen that she acts as a sort of "gatekeeper". Depending upon prices, market, availability, etc., the housewife determines for the most part the food selection. She lets through the "gate," then, foods of her selection.[34]

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[33] Maier, op. cit., p. 264 ff.

[34] K. Lewin, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics, II," Human Relations, Vol. 1, No. 2, (1947), pp 143-153.

Lewin was led to observe:

> A certain area within a channel may function as
> a "gate"; the constellation of the forces before and
> after the gate region is decisively different in such
> a way that the passing of the unit through the whole
> channel depends to a high degree upon what happens
> in the gate region. This holds not only for food
> channels but also for the travelling of a news item
> through certain communication channels in a group,
> for movement of goods, and the social locomotion of
> individuals in many organization. . . . Gate
> sections are governed either by impartial rules
> or by "gate keepers." In the latter case an indi-
> vidual or group is "in power" for making the
> decision between "in" or "out." Understanding the
> functioning of the gate becomes equivalent then to
> understanding the factors which determine the
> decisions of the gate keepers and changing the
> social process means influencing or replacing the
> gatekeeper.[35]

5. Hutte's experiment[36] to determine in what way human re-
lations in industry are effected by their being investigated
is unique. Hutte was struck with the findings of an earlier
study (based upon 2,000 interviews in several industries)
which led to the conclusion that "satisfaction in work" was
related to: (a) the opinion at home about the worker's job,
(b) the emotional "tie" with the company, (3) the relations
to the immediate supervisor and working group. Without

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[35] Ibid., p. 145.

[36] H.A. Hutte, "Experiences in Studying Social-Psycho-
logical Structure in Industry," Human Relations, Vol. 2,
No. 2, (1949), pp. 185-192.
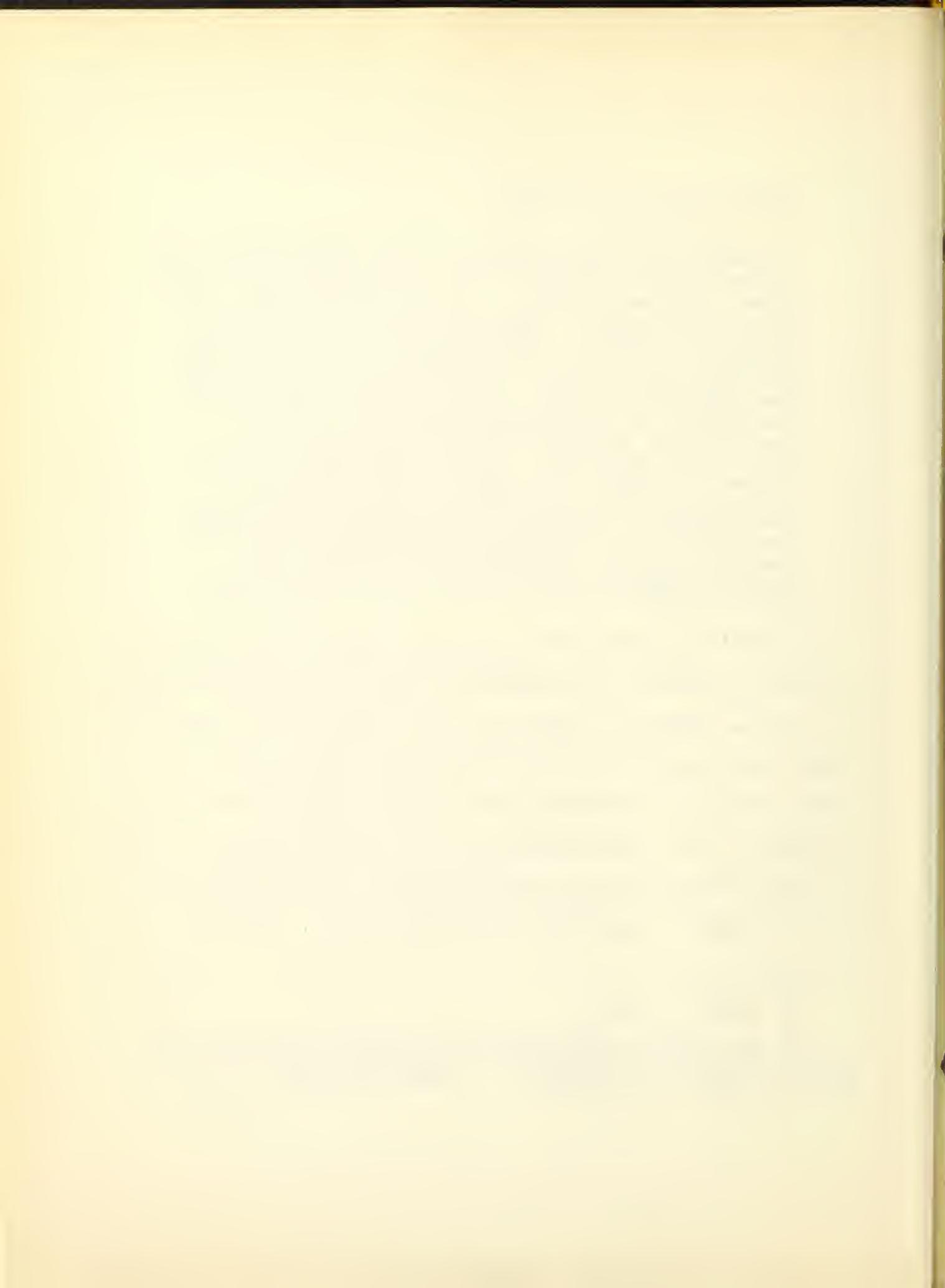
going into the research design, it will suffice here to give

Hutte's conclusions in his preliminary study:

>   (a) Approval and cooperation of both management
> and workers is essential before initiating industrial
> research.
>
>   (b) A study of sub-groups is unlikely to be
> effective without studying over all relationships.
>
>   (c) To achieve successful changes in re-
> lationships within the firm requires change process
> to go on at the top of the heirarchy as well as in
> lower groups.
>
>   (d) It is as necessary to study the changes
> exerted upon the investigating team by the influ-
> ences from the social field as it is the changes
> in the rest of the social field.[37]

b. Role Playing. The acting out or "explaining by

doing" some social skill in a situation which is "not for

keeps" is called role playing. Although it is a form of com-

munication just as the theatre and drama forms are communi-

cation, nevertheless, it is a method of changing behavior.

A very good example of role playing was demonstrated

recently at the School of Public Relations. The purpose

was to "explain by doing" skill in a social situation - -

interviewing. Both the role of the interviewer and the

interviewee were played by students so as to visualize for

a large class the "right" and "wrong" approaches to the

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[37] Ibid., p. 191.

interviewee in the interview situation. All this served a
very practical end since these 40 or 50 students were being
readied for interviewing citizens of a suburban community
on a mass scale as a part of a study being conducted on the
community.

Bavelas[38] has m.de the point that the conference or
group discussion method, successful as it is in presenting
points of view, involving the participants, and changing
attitudes, suffers as a technique because it is confined to
"talking about" rather than "doing."

As a technique for effecting behavior changes, role-
playing must be carried out under the direction of someone
who is aware of its limitations and dangers for producing a
"boomerage" effect.

c. Inter-group Relations. In this area of research, a
number of problems arising from inter-group frictions and
hostilities are being dealt with. Understanding the nature
of these problems is the purpose of the investigations: the
origin of discriminatory attitudes, the process of inter-
action between majority and minority groups, reactions to

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38 A. Bavelas, "Role Playing and Management Training,"
Sociatry, Vol. 1, No. 2, (June, 1947), pp. 183-191.

discrimination on the part of minority group members.

A continuing project in five public schools of Philadelphia is attempting to discover the role of the public school in developing attitudes of tolerance. The research design of this project included two other objectives:

(1) To study methods of influencing teachers of young children so that they can be made more effective in their task of developing in their pupils attitudes and behavior basic to democratic group living; (2) as a means of reaching this first objective, to collect data concerning the children's concepts and attitudes relating to group relations.[39]

The change process, with respect to the teachers, required gaining the interest and confidence of the teachers, and overcoming their fears and resistance. The second phase of the research, in addition to continuing the teacher training, was concerned with a study of the child's awareness of social standards and prejudices, and attitudes toward himself and children of other cultural groups. Five different research techniques were used in this step:

1) Projective tests using a series of pictures of social episodes.

2) A "role performance" test using doll materials.

3) Teachers' records of conflict incidents in the classroom.

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[39] *Research in Progress*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

4) Teachers' interviews with children.

5) Sociometric observations from the classroom.[40]

Significantly enough, the study has pointed out that the teacher unconsciously communicates her own attutudes to the pupils; prejudice can be unlearned and democracy can be taught.

In another experiment in the public schools of Pittsburg, social scientists were interested in the possibilities of creating sound democratic attitudes and patterns of behavior through extra-curricular activities. In an after-school recreation club for Negro and white children, procedures were examined to determine the most effective way of establishing healthy interrelations. Recruiting for mixed racial clubs was shown to be most effective when the children of one race were recruited as a pair or group of already good friends.[41]

A somewhat different type of experiment is that reported by Marrow and French[42] and is included here because of the "stereotype" (prejudice) which brought it about.

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[40] Loc. cit.

[41] Loc. cit.

[42] A.J. Marrow and J.R.P. French, Jr., "Changing a Stereotype in Industry," Journal Soc. Issues, (August,1945), pp. 33-37.

The study deals with the bias in industry against "older women" as skilled workers. Many large companies consistently refuse to hire women over thirty because of the persistence of the stereotype idea that for skilled jobs older women are inferior to younger ones. This study reports the technique used to modify top managements policy during a war-time labor shortage.

No headway could be made in altering the group bias until a series of re-education steps was taken:

1. Involvement of top-management group in research. The problem: How much money was the company losing by employment of older women (the company did have a number of women who had been with the company a number of years).

2. Management set up criteria for the evaluating the worker to the company; rate of production, rate of turn over, absenteeism, and speed of learn- ing.

3. Management also decided what provided the better measurement of production and suggested what operations should be analyzed. All of this tended to thoroughly involve the top-management group in the project.

It was found:

. . . . in all four criteria which management itself had specified as essential, the findings showed that women over 30 are as good if not better than younger ones. Even more interesting than the figures them- selves was the reaction to this experiment of the top-management group. They were both excited and pleased at having participated in this important dis- covery which had become their own.

The authors conclude:

Thus through a process of participation, discussion
and group decision succeeded in uprooting a strong
prejudice where argument and persuasion had failed.

II. IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

General Hypothesies. From the forgoing account of
investigations which have been carried on in Group Dynamics,
a number of general hypothesies may logically be drawn:

1. It is easier to change the attitudes and behavior
of individuals formed into groups than it is to change these
individuals separately.

2. The process of re-education is essentially the
same as a change in culture (e.g., values and standards,
beliefs and attitudes, emotional needs and conduct). This
may be accomplished (a) by changing the culture of the group,
or (b) by the individual becoming identified with a new
group.

3. The type of leader-role and/or established group
traditions will determine the pattern and atmosphere of
social interaction.

   (a) authoritarian group atmosphere is characterized
   by high aggression or submission, low personal satis-
   faction and medium creative productivity.

   (b) laissez-faire group atmosphere is characterized

by high aggression, medium personal satisfaction and
low creative productivity.

(c) democratic group atmosphere is characterized by
medium aggression, high personal satisfaction and high
creative productivity.

4. The degree to which the leader-role will influence
the group's behavior is inversely related to the extent of
established tradition in the group:

(a) in a new group (not having a tradition), the
leader-role will, for the most part, determine the
group's behavior, but

(b) in the established group (having a tradition),
the leader-role, for the most part, is subject to and
determined by the group's tradition.

5. The nature, quality and extent of communication
determines the structure of the group:

(a) The more active the process of communication
within the group, the more cohesive the group will be:

(b) The more "personalized" the methods and content
of the communication, the more effective it seems to be:

(c) The homogeneity of attitudes, opinions and
behavior results directly from the continuing process
of communication.

6. Democratic group behavior as a type of social
interaction is a reality, can be learned and seems to be
the "social climate" most suited to man's best interests.

    (a) Small face-to-face groups of cooperating indi-
viduals seem more effective in problem solving than do
individuals working alone and/or in competition with
each other.

    (b) Discussion which results in group decision is
significantly more effective in modifying behavior than
either lecture or discussion.

Their Meaning for the Practitioner. The extent to which
the public relations practitioner will find the above hypo-
thesies applicable in social usage will depend primarily upon
(1) the extent to which his perceptions will permit him to
view these hypothesies with confidence, and (2) the manner
in which he perceives the nature and needs of public re-
lations functions in which these hypothesies are operative.

    It is not the intention of this study to enumerate the
many and specific instances in which the above principles
might apply. Rather, their effective use by the practitioner
will depend largely upon how well the "knowing" of these
concepts become integrated with his social behavior. The
behavior of a gentleman, though learned, is performed most
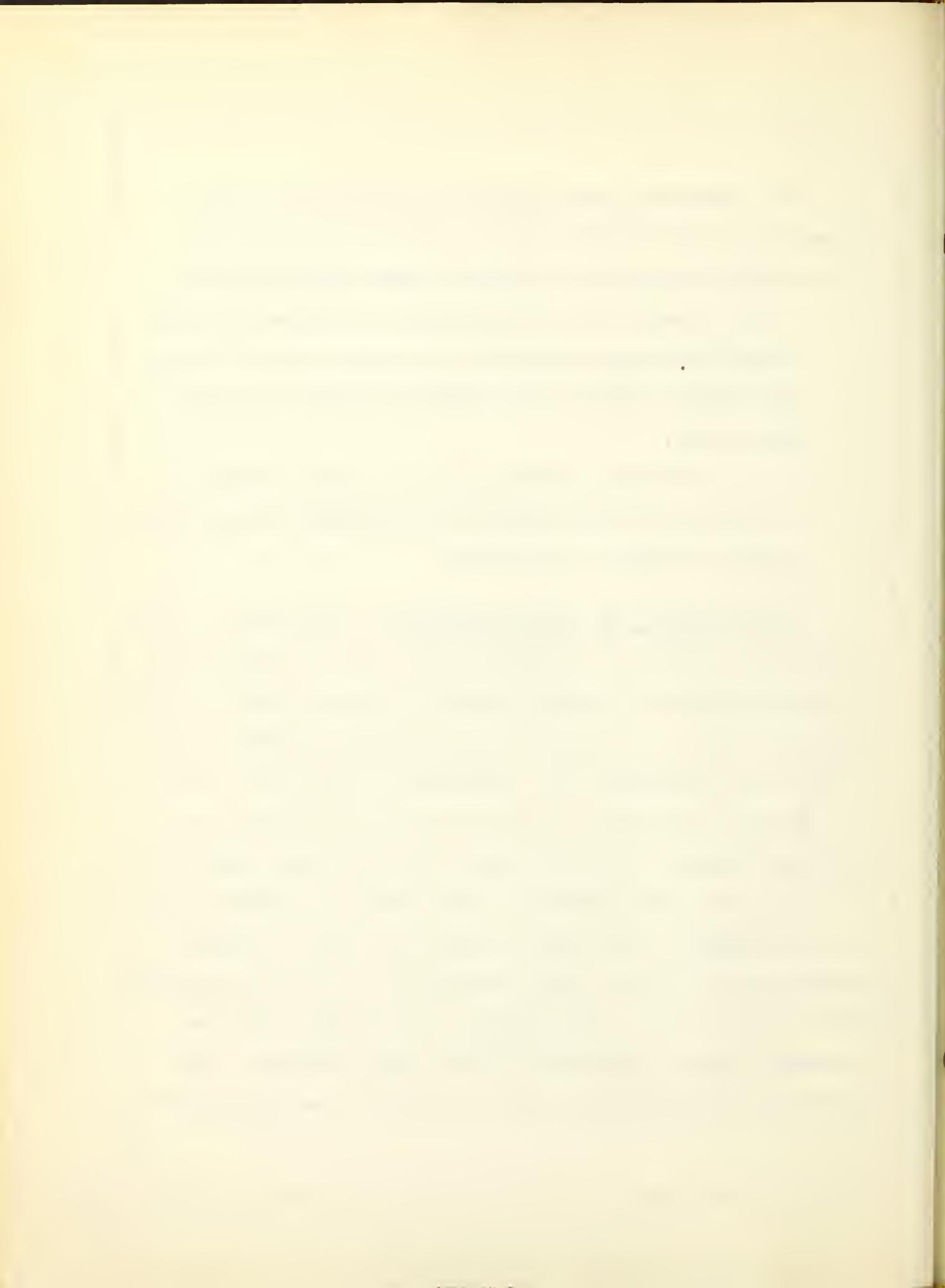
effective when called into use automatically by the appropriate combination of factors in the social and physical environment. To be most useful they must become a part of the "habit" thinking.

Widely applied, the concepts which have been outlined here would greatly increase the effectiveness of industry's community and employee relations. Industrial development which is concerned only with technological improvement will eventually bog down unless equal concern for progress in the human factor is instituted.

Men trained in mechanics are invariably placed in charge of machines, but supervisors untrained in humanics, more often than not, are considered sufficiently qualified to be placed in charge of human beings. Few industries use trained psychologists or make any special effort to select supervisory personnel who can apply even the simplest principles of social psychology. This has been the root evil of numerous and unnecessary worker-management conflicts with their high cost in poor morale, inefficient and reduced production. If, as Lewin seems to think, "social action no less than physical action is steered by perception,"[43]

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[43] Resolving Social Conflicts, op. cit., p. 61.

then it follows that the effectiveness of the practitioner's
service to his client in these situations depends upon how
realistically he perceives the cause-effect relationship.

Conger Reynolds, director of public relations for the
Standard Oil Company, recently reported the results of an
attitude survey made by his company. As "surprising -- almost
sensational" as the survey results may seem, they serve only
to confirm what is already known about the nature of communica-
tion in the group process. Reynolds reported that:

> Interviewers asked, "Where did you get that im-
> pression?" We learned that 77 per cent of the favorable
> impressions and 55 per cent of the unfavorable were
> gained through customer experience or from personal
> contacts with employees or dealers, that 17 per cent of
> the favorable impressions and 24 per cent of the unfav-
> orable developed out of hearsay and personal observation,
> that 2.5 per cent of the favorable impressions and 17.4
> per cent of the unfavorable were gained from reading
> newspapers, magazines, etc., and that 2.8 per cent of
> both kinds of impressions were obtained from radio, ad-
> vertising, school and other sources including those
> unknown. . . . Thus a total of 94.7 per cent of all the
> favorable impressions, according to what people them-
> selves tell us, are gained from what we have heretofore
> regarded as minor means of communication with the public
> -- the personal contacts we have with people, word of
> mouth publicity, and people's own use of their eyes.
> Of the unfavorable impressions 79.8 per cent are gained
> in the same manner. [44]

Such facts serve to re-emphasize the importance of per-
sonal contact in determining public opinion. They suggest,
too, that the most effective public relations is done at the
community-employee level.

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[44] Conger Reynolds, "Our 65,000 Public Relations Repre-
sentatives." Standard Oil, 1948.

To be convinced, it is only necessary to see how effectively Community Chest drives have mobilized entire communities by the use of armies of volunteer citizens in house-to-house solicitation; how the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Boys' Clubs have interested thousands of volunteers to participate in their programs.

The technique of organizing local community groups to serve a useful community purpose might prove to be a highly successful community relations technique. Citizen or citizen-plant committees that might be organized include community recreation committees, community advisory committees, leadership panels associated with the company, community planning committees, community chests and others. Even where such committees already exist, plant-community relations may well be improved by management going out of its way to encourage its personnel to participate in these activities. Encouragement might well mean that participation by employees on plant time may occasionally be necessary. However, such community programs that might be initiated by the plant would presume the services of persons skilled in developing cooperative atmospheres in the conduct of these activities.

Obviously, the principles that have been listed above can operate in the whole range of small group gatherings

with which the practitioner frequently must deal: directors

meetings, executive conferences, supervisory training pro-

grams, employee meetings, management-labor conferences, and

community-plant committees.

By a simple content analysis of a number of sample

definitive books, articles and speeches on public relations

written by outstanding members of the profession, Sussman[45]

was able to determine the number one theme of the public

relations ideology. It is this:

> To meet this threat (that the system of private
> enterprize will be replaced by a state-controlled
> economy), business must adopt an entirely new
> philosophy. Business can no longer be run pri-
> marily by the "owners" in order to make profits for
> them. Instead it must be run primarily by a pro-
> fessionalized management whose prime function is
> to serve the public by serving and coordinating
> the interests of all groups affected by the enter-
> prize: stockholders, employees, consumers, the
> local community and government.

In the light of knowledge of the dynamics of group

processes, this attempt on the part of business to maintain

an economic status quo as its main public relations theme

is an unrealistic approach to the problems, national and

international, growing out of the "cold war." This contest

between ideologies tends to characterize intergroup re-

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[45] Sussman, op. cit., p. 119.

lations from the level of the local community to the level
of the world community. Present public relations efforts
are directed at creating a condition in the American economy
which can best be described in Lewin's concept of a quasi-
stationary equilibrium, e.g., the social forces which make
for a natural "flow" of the change rate have been artifi-
cally regulated so that they are in an unnatural relation-
ship. Any attempt to re-arrange natural processes sooner
or later will fail. Change is the one great irresistable
force. It may be slowed down or speeded up, but it can't
be stoped.

Few people - including business leaders - are fooled
by the word magic and abracadabra in such a public relations
theme. Business may be afraid of government control but the
people themselves do not relish either of the present possi-
bilities: control by business, control by labor or control
by government. The other alternative, of course, is control
by the people themselves. Since it has been demonstrated
that democratic social behavior can be taught, it might be
undertaken on a hugh scale to prepare the people for this
eventually.

Since the public relations practitioner serves

as a kind of master mind who coordinates the com-
plexities of publicity, advertising, public opinion

analysis, political science and community organiza-
tion toward the sale of whatever his client has to
offer.[46]

it follows that if business were proudly promoting the demo-

cratic process, the public relations practitioner would be

promoting an idea and an item in which he could believe.

If business and industry initiated a broad, cooperative

public relations program on this theme rather than trying to

maintain a power position in a "frozen" economy, they might

really justify holding top leader-roles in a dynamic economy.

Few industries spend more for public relations than do

the private utility companies. Yet, "at least two-thirds

of our adult population regard private utility companies

dubiously and suspiciously."[47] Obviously the mere spending of

large sums of money does not insure good public relations.

Since such a wide-spread attitude is unrealistic even though

some private utilities certainly deserve to be regarded sus-

piciously, it must be attributed, in part, to stereotype

thinking. The mechanics of prejudice are the same whether

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[46] June Blythe, "Can Public Relations Help Reduce Pre-
judice?" Public Opinion Q., Vol. 22, No. 3, (Fall, 1947),
p. 343.

[47] A.A. Imberman, "A Public Relations Policy for
Private Utilities," Public Opinion Q., Vol. 13, No. 1,
(Spring, 1949), p. 24.

directed against a racial or religious minority or against a corporation or private utility. They are attitudes and opinions unsupported by facts. Thus they result in behavior inconsistent with reality. As a barrier to effective social interaction, prejudice has been studied by social psychologists interested in group dynamics. They have developed methods of combating racial and religious prejudice that may just as well apply to combating anti-corporation or anti-private utility prejudice. The same might hold for resolving prejudices held by business executives against large sections of public holding new ideas, against unions, or against the role of government. Prejudice of any kind represent the "freezing" of group attitudes. This condition, unchanged by logic or appeals to reason, result in psychological warfare between groups, i.e., labor vs management, big business vs small business, chains vs independents, business vs government.

The increasing knowledge about dynamic group processes and functions will be far more useful to the public relations practitioner for the insights it provides for working with people in a manner consistent with the democratic process. The very nature of the public relations function, demands that the practitioner be highly trained in human relation skills.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1.   The methods and research in Group Dynamics are
both socially useful and scientifically meaningful for the
public relations field, particularly with reference to those
problems arising in small-group face-to-face relationships.

2.   Although what is known about the processes of com-
munication is still relatively meager, the present level of
information would seem to recommend an increased effort
on that part of the public relations program which deals
with employee-community relations.

   a.   It has been demonstrated that the greater the
   amount of "personalism" the communication act contains,
   the more effective it presumably is.

   b.   There seems to be evidence of the increasing
   difficulty of mass media communication to fulfill ex-
   pectations.

3.   Because of the problems resulting from the growth
of giant corporations and other large organizations, it
seems advisable in the interest of improved public relations
to decentralize their programs and shift them to the level
of small-group face -to-face relationships.   Local personnel,
with contacts well anchored in the community, could ad-

minister the program while resources and techniques might continue to be available from the national level.

4.   In the interest of a more realistic approach to problems developing out of the atmosphere of an ideological "cold war," it is suggested that business and industry shift its main public relations theme from an effort to maintain a socio-economic status quo to an effort to make the democratic process operative in our various social, economic and political organizations.

5.   Lewin's concepts of "social channels" and "gatekeepers" are important to the public relations field as the basis for discovering "the most influential" people in an audience. Such a technique properly developed will have valuable implications for reducing program costs by using a "rifle shot" technique rather than the traditional "shot-gun blast" which frequently characterizes contemporary public relations programs.

6.   The way in which communication is transmitted in various types of social structures suggests that these "social channels" might be more fully utilized to transmit the public relations message. The organizing of community groups to structure communication and influence social change may well become a highly effective public relations technique.

7. If public relations is to be elevated from "the bag of tricks level", there must be a greater emphasis upon development and use of social science research. This might be accomplished by:

a. A "social science translator." Such a person would have sufficient public relations and social science background to qualify him to (1) translate social science developments into their implications for the public relations field, and (2) translate for the social scientist those "live problems" in the public relations field which stand in need of research.

b. A cooperating inter-field committee. Such a committee would be composed of people from organizations in the public relations field, (i.e., schools of public relations, the Public Relations Society of America, one or two outstanding public relations firms or departments) and from several of the more outstanding social research centers (i.e., the Center for Social Science Research at the University of Michigan, the Committee on Human Relations in Industry at the University of Chicago, the Industrial Relations Section at MIT, the Human Relations Center at Yale University, and the Division of Research at

Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration).

8.   While an increase in tested human-relations skills
and understandings is important to all members of a demo-
cratic society, the effectiveness of the public relations
practitioner is profoundly dependent on mastery of de-
pendable insights and skills in group dynamics.

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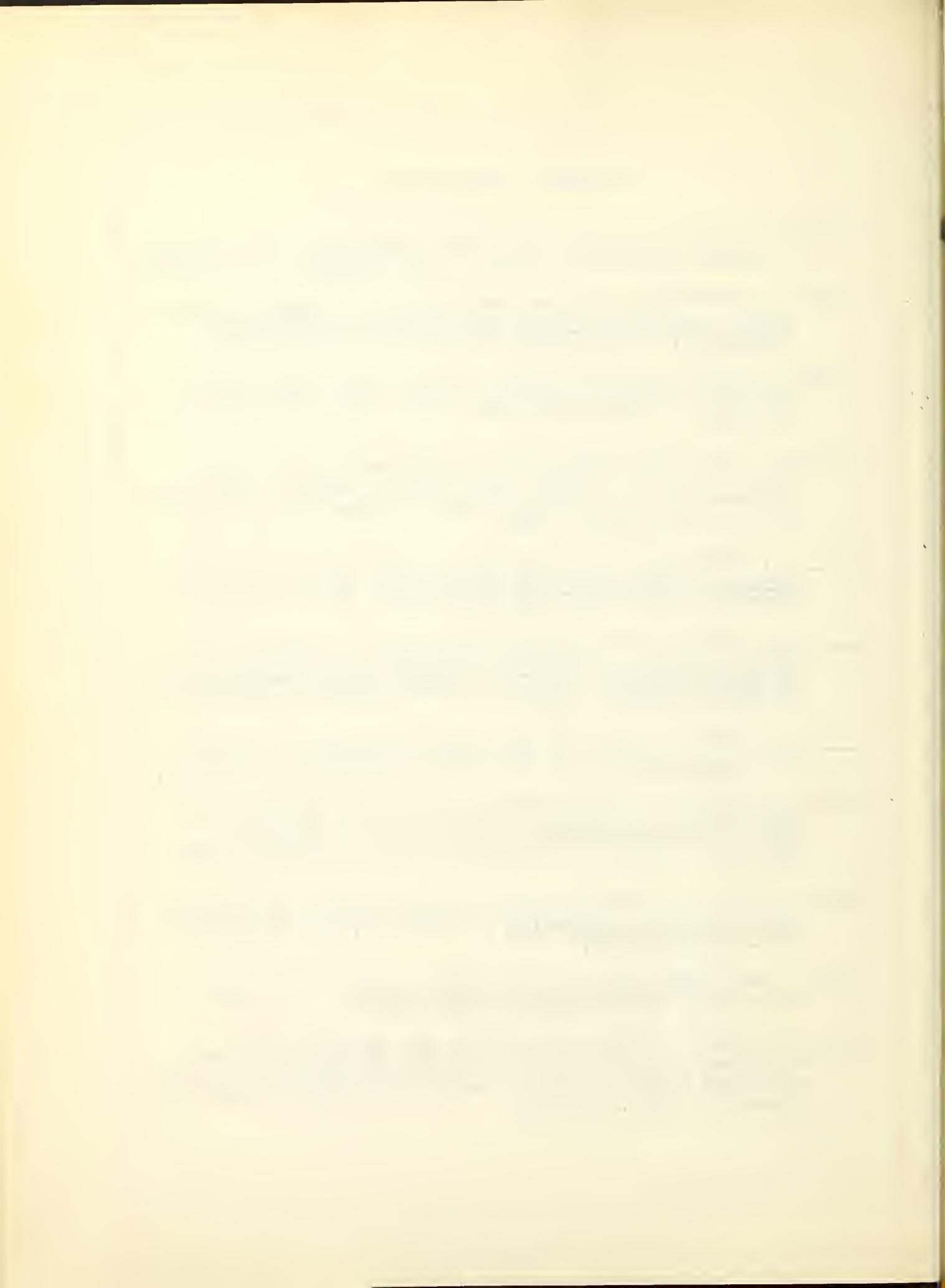
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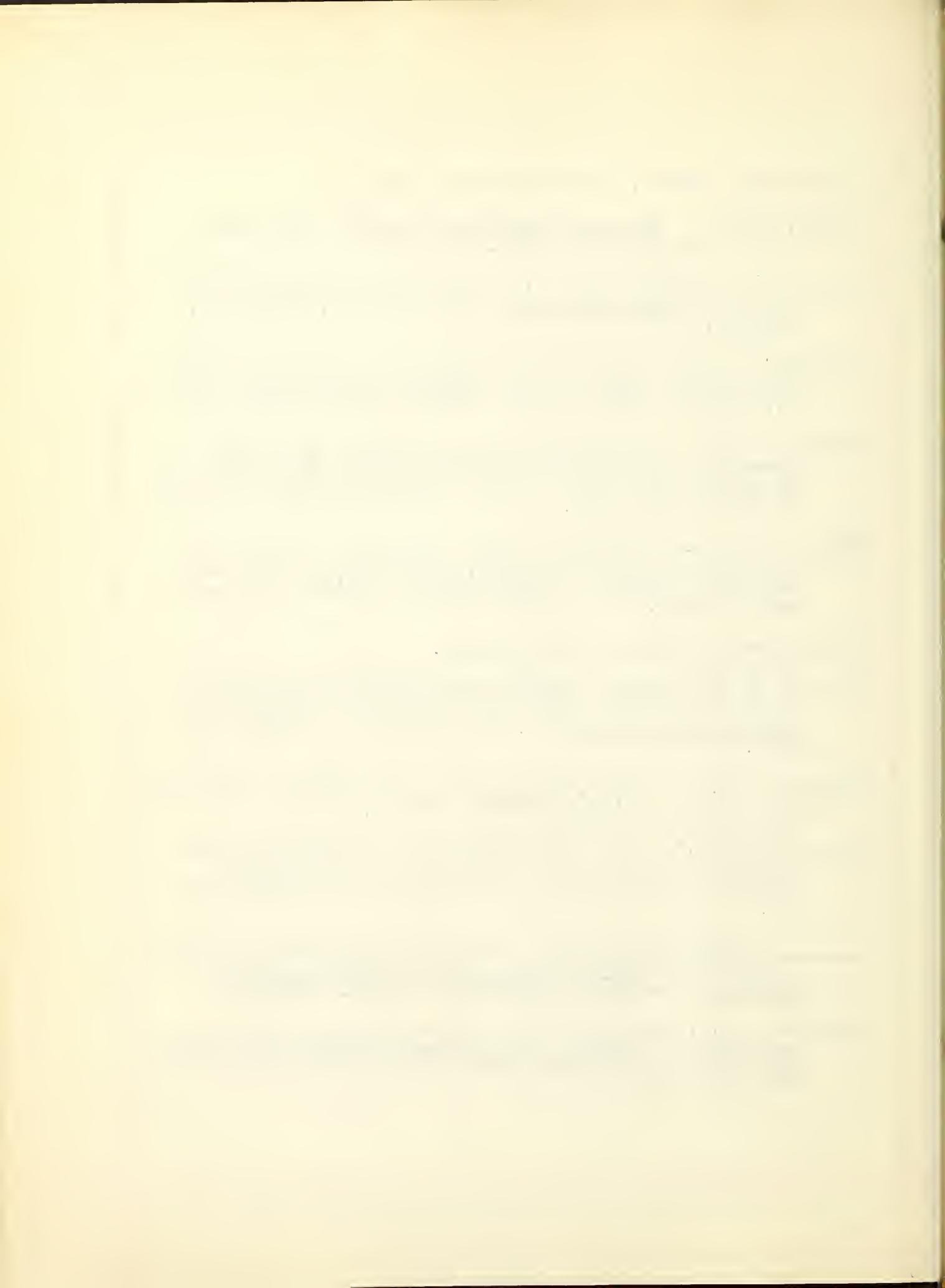
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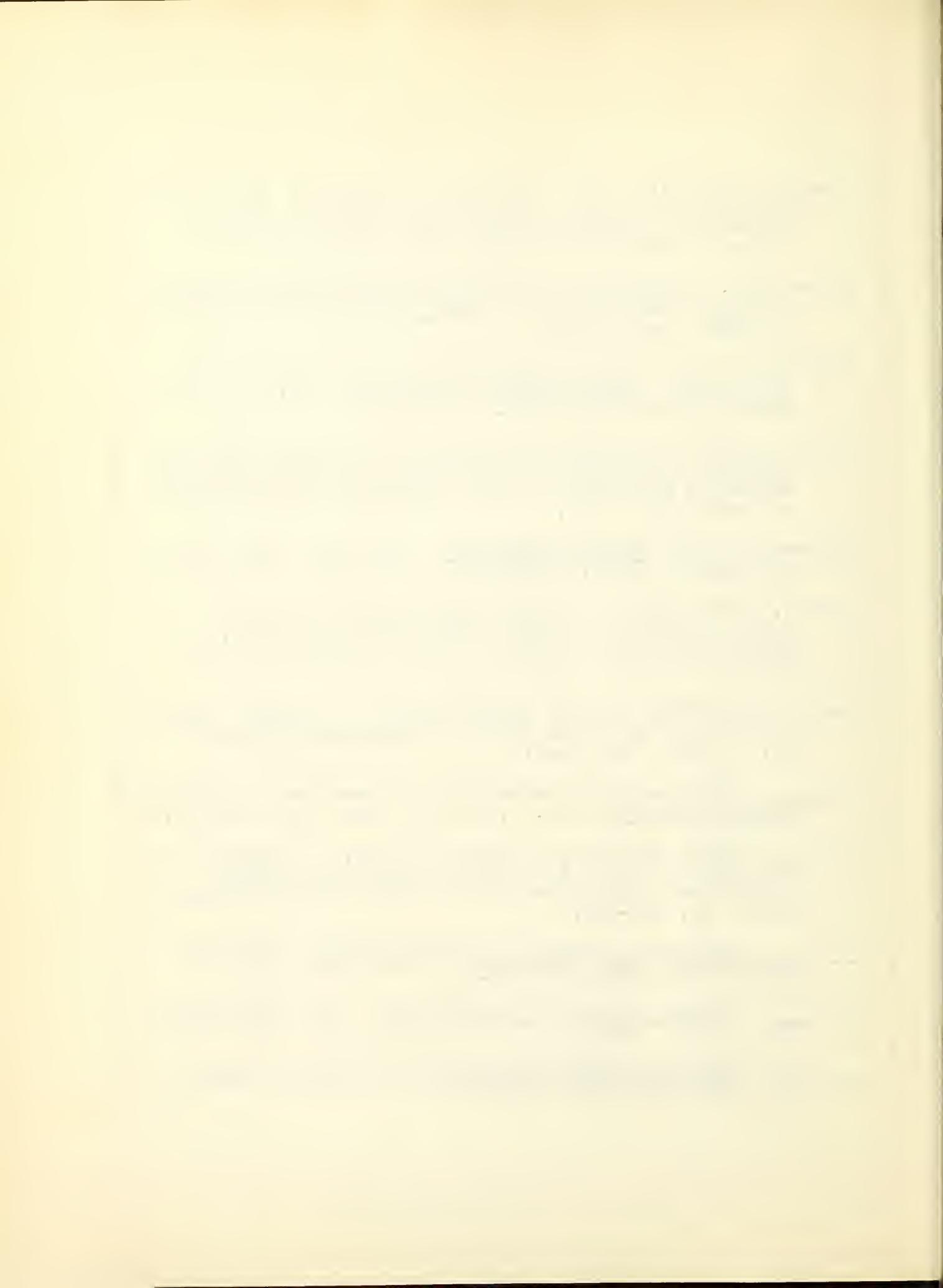
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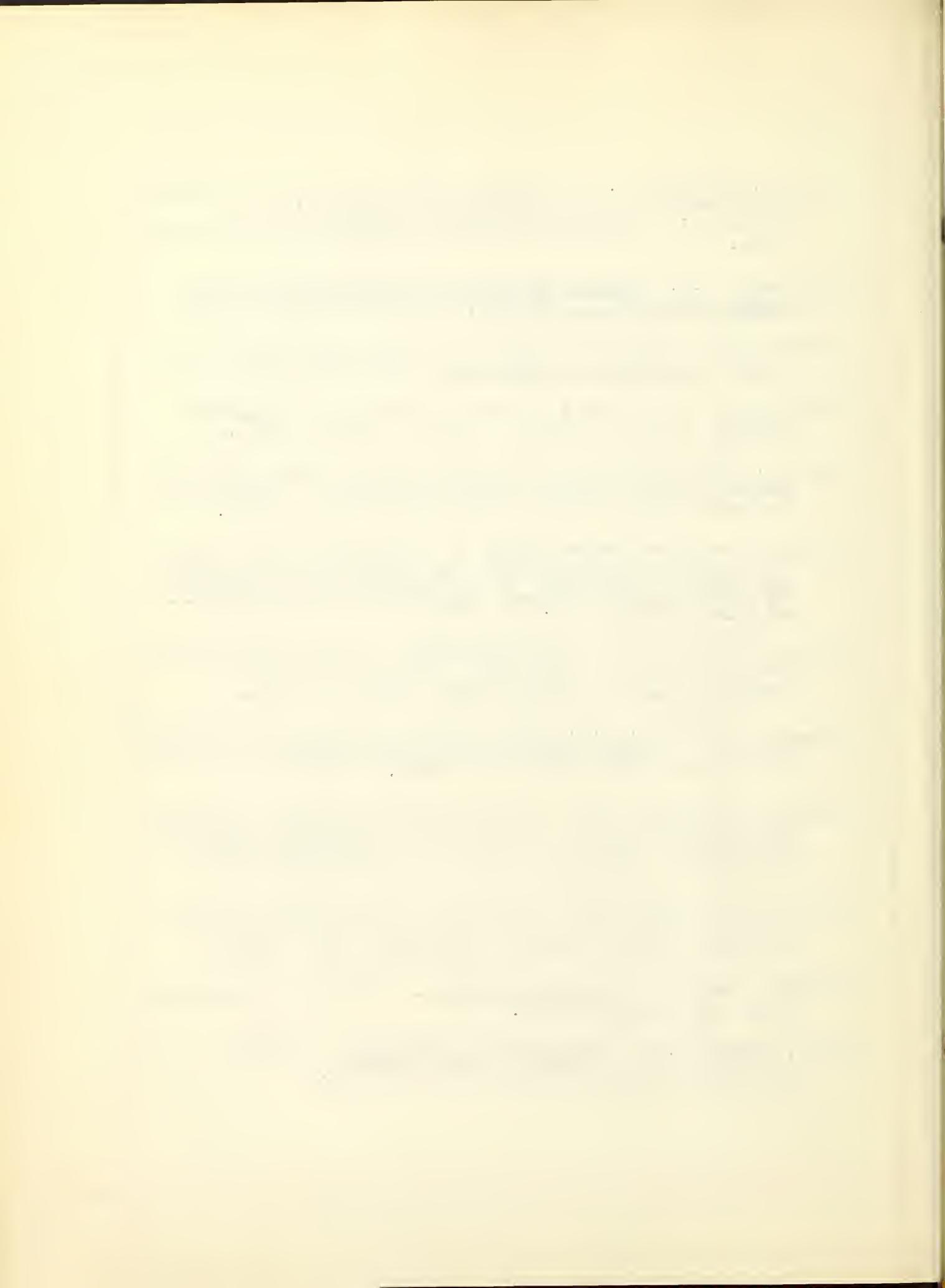
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